

West Mercia Police and Crime Panel

Agenda

West Mercia Police and Crime Panel

**Wednesday, 7 February 2024, 11.00 am
Wychavon District Council (Civic Centre,
Queen Elizabeth Drive, Pershore,
Worcestershire, WR10 1PT)**

This document can be made available in other formats (large print, audio tape, computer disk and Braille) on request from Scrutiny on telephone number 01905 844963 or by emailing scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk

West Mercia Police and Crime Panel
Wednesday, 7 February 2024, 11.00 am, Civic Centre, Pershore

Membership:

Cllr Barry Durkin (Chairman)	Substantive Member - Herefordshire Council
Cllr Rob Adams (Vice Chair)	Substantive Member - Wychavon District Council
Cllr Joanne Beecham	Substantive member - Redditch Borough Council
Cllr Roger Evans	Co-opted Member - Shropshire Council
Cllr John Gallagher	Substantive Member - Malvern Hills District Council
Cllr Liz Harvey	Co-opted Member - Herefordshire Council
Cllr Helen Jones	Substantive Member - Bromsgrove District Council
Cllr Nigel Lumby	Substantive Member - Shropshire Council
Cllr Kelly Middleton	Substantive Member - Telford and Wrekin Council
Cllr Tracey Onslow	Substantive Member - Wyre Forest District Council
Cllr Richard Overton	Co-opted Member - Telford and Wrekin Council
Cllr Vivienne Parry	Co-opted Member - Shropshire Council
Cllr Tony Parsons	Co-opted Member - Shropshire Council
Cllr Tom Piotrowski	Substantive Member - Worcester City Council
Cllr James Stanley	Substantive Member - Worcestershire County Council
Mrs Carole Clive	Co-opted Independent Lay Member
Ms Beth McDowall	Co-opted Independent Lay Member

Agenda

Item No	Subject	Page No
1	Welcome and Introductions	
2	Named Substitutes	
3	Apologies and Declarations of Interest	
4	Public Participation Members of the public wishing to take part should notify the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance in writing or by e-mail indicating both the nature and content of their proposed participation no later than 9.00am on the working day before the meeting (in this case 6 February 2024). Further details are available on the Council's website. Enquiries can also be made through the telephone number/e-mail address listed in this agenda and on the website.	

Agenda produced and published by the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance, County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester WR5 2NP

To obtain further information or a copy of this agenda contact Samantha Morris, Interim Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager on Worcester (01905) 844963 email: sjmorris@worcestershire.gov.uk

Reports and supporting information can be accessed via the Council's website at www.worcestershire.gov.uk

Date of Issue: Tuesday, 30 January 2024

Item No	Subject	Page No
5	West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner's Proposed Precept and Budget 2024-25	1 - 72
6	Police & Crime Plan Activity and Performance Monitoring Report	73 - 88
7	West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner's End of Term Report	89 - 140
8	Work Programme	141 - 146

NOTES

- **Webcasting**

Members of the Panel are reminded that meetings of the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel are Webcast on the Internet and will be stored electronically and accessible through the Council's Website. Members of the public are informed that if they attend this meeting their images and speech may be captured by the recording equipment used for the Webcast and may also be stored electronically and accessible through the Council's Website.

WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL 7 FEBRUARY 2024

WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S PROPOSED PRECEPT AND BUDGET 2024/25

Recommendation

1. It is recommended that the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel (PCP) considers the:
 - (i) West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) Proposed Budget 2024/25 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25 – 2028/29;
 - (ii) report of the PCP's Budget Scrutiny Sub Group; and
 - (iii) provides a report to the PCC on the proposed precept, including any recommendations, outlining whether it vetoes the precept or not.

Background

2. Each police force area raises extra money to pay for policing activity through council tax. This is called the police precept and is included in every council tax bill. The level of police precept is set locally every year (in February) by the PCC.
3. Under the provisions of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, the PCP has a statutory role to review the PCC's proposed precept level and formally respond to it. The Panel is required to submit a formal response to the PCC.
4. The legislation only requires that the Panel 'responds' to the proposed precept – there is no requirement that the Panel has to either support the precept or veto it; therefore, the Panel can choose to only comment on the proposal if it wishes. Guidance related to the scrutiny of the precept by Police and Crime Panels is attached at Appendix 1.

Budget Scrutiny

5. During January 2024 a Panel Sub Group met with the PCC and his officers to discuss the proposed budget for 2024/2025, the Medium Term Financial Plan through to 2028/2029 and the proposed Precept for 2024/25 in context of the Policing Plan and the Commissioner's election promises. The Report of the Sub Group is attached at Appendix 2.

West Mercia PCC proposed Budget 2024/25 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25 – 2028/29

6. The West Mercia PCC Proposed Budget 2024/25 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25 – 2028/29 is attached at Appendix 3.

Consultation

7. To understand the priorities of residents and help inform the PCC prior to firming up his draft budget proposals for 2024/25, public consultation was undertaken through community engagement events. The events took place during six months throughout the summer period.
8. The PCC followed this up by carrying out a survey, specifically on the draft precept and budget proposals. This consultation launched on the 7 December 2023 and ended at 12am on the 7 January 2024. A precept proposal, the Proposed Budget 2024/25 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25–2028/29 was published as part of the consultation process, along with a short online survey to enable people to comment on the proposals being put forward. The Budget Consultation Summary is attached at Appendix 4.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 - Guidance related to the Scrutiny of the Precept by Police and Crime Panels

Appendix 2 – West Mercia Police and Crime Panel – Budget Sub Group Report (to follow)

Appendix 3 West Mercia PCC proposed Budget 2024/25 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25 – 2028/29

Appendix 4 - Budget Consultation Summary 2024/25

Contact Points for the Report

For the Police and Crime Panel: Samantha Morris, Interim Democratic, Governance and Scrutiny Manager, Worcestershire County Council

Tel: 01905 844963

Email: sjmorris@worcestershire.gov.uk

For the Police and Crime Commissioner: Gareth Boulton, Police and Crime Commissioner, Chief Executive

gareth.boulton@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Democratic, Governance and Scrutiny Manager (Interim Monitoring Officer) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.

[All agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website](#)

Police and Crime Panels – Scrutiny of Precepts

This guidance note explains the process for the police and crime panel's (PCP) scrutiny of the police and crime commissioner's (PCC) proposed precept and should be read alongside:

- Schedule 5 of the [Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011](#) ("the Act")
- Part 2 of the [Police and Crime Panels \(Precepts and Chief Constable Appointments\) Regulations 2012](#) ("the Regulations")

A separate [guidance note setting out the scrutiny of chief constable appointments](#) has been published alongside this guidance note.

Background

Schedule 5 of the Act sets out the process for issuing a precept, including the panel's role in reviewing the proposed precept, their power to veto the precept and the steps to be taken if they do veto the proposed precept.

The Regulations provide greater detail to the Act, including time limits applicable to the stages of the process and the process for reviewing and issuing a revised precept.

Schedule 5 requires:

- the PCC to notify the panel of his/her proposed precept;
- the panel to review the proposed precept;
- the panel to make a report to the PCC on the proposed precept (this may include recommendations);
- the panel's report (if they veto the proposed precept) to include a statement that they have vetoed it;
- a decision of veto to be agreed by two-thirds of the panel members;
- the PCC to have regard to the report made by the panel (including any recommendations in the report);
- the PCC to give the panel a response to their report (and any such recommendations);
- the PCC to publish the response.

It is for the panel to determine how a response to a report or recommendations is to be published.

If there is no veto and the PCC has published his/her response to the panel's report, the PCC may then issue the proposed precept - or a different precept (but only if in accordance with a recommendation in the panel's report to do so).

The Regulations require:

- the PCC to notify the panel of his/her proposed precept **by 1 February**;
- the panel to review and make a report to the PCC on the proposed precept (whether it vetoes the precept or not) **by 8 February**;
- where the panel vetoes the precept, the PCC to have regard to and respond to the Panel's report, and publish his/her response, including the revised precept, **by 15 February**;

- the panel, on receipt of a response from the PCC notifying them of his/her revised precept, to review the revised precept and make a second report to the PCC **by 22 February**;
- the PCC to have regard to and respond to the Panel's second report and publish his/her response, **by 1 March**.

Panel's report on the proposed precept

If the panel fails to report to the PCC by 8 February the scrutiny process comes to an end, even if the panel have voted to veto the proposed precept, and the PCC may issue the proposed precept.

PCC's response to a veto

Where the panel vetoes the proposed precept, the PCC must have regard to the report made by the panel, give the panel a response to the report and publish the response, by 15 February. In his/her response, the PCC must notify the panel of the revised precept that he intends to issue.

Where the panel's report indicates that they vetoed the precept because it was:

- too **high**, the revised precept must be lower than the previously proposed precept.
- too **low**, the revised precept must be higher than the previously proposed precept.

The PCP may only veto the first proposed precept. Such a veto must be agreed by two-thirds of PCP members (the full membership rather than those present at a meeting). Where a veto occurs, the report to the PCC must include a statement to that effect.

Panel's review of the revised precept

On receipt of a response from the PCC notifying them of the revised precept proposal, the panel must review the revised precept proposal and make a second report to the PCC on the revised precept by 22 February. This report may:

- indicate whether the panel accepts or rejects the revised precept (although rejection does not prevent the PCC from issuing the revised precept); and
- make recommendations, including recommendations on the precept that should be issued.

If the panel fails to make a second report to the PCC by 22 February, the PCC may issue the revised precept.

Issuing the precept

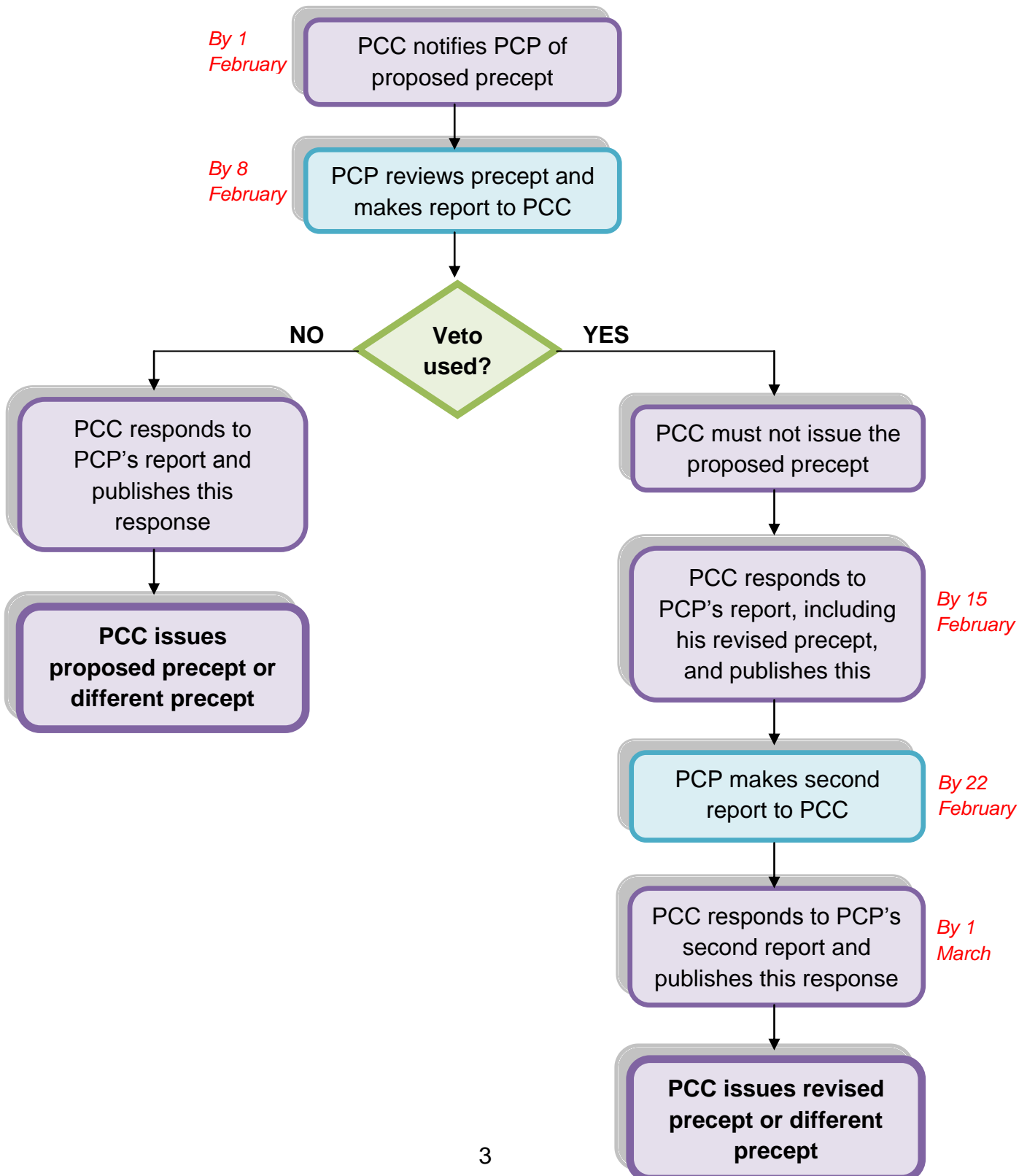
Excluding where the panel fails to report on the proposed precept by 8 February or make a second report on the revised precept by 22 February, the scrutiny process ends when the PCC gives the panel his/her response to their second report.

The PCC may then:

- issue the revised precept; or
- issue a different precept, although:

- they must not issue a precept that is higher than the revised precept if the revised precept was lowered following the panel's initial report on the first proposed precept indicating it was vetoed because it was too high;
- they must not issue a precept which is lower than the revised precept if the revised precept was raised following the panel's initial report on the first proposed precept indicating it was vetoed because it was too low.

Process for PCP scrutiny of PCC's proposed precept



This page is intentionally left blank



WEST MERCIA DRAFT BUDGET 2024/25

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2024/25 TO 2028/29



Foreword from the PCC:

My mission for the communities of Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Worcestershire remains unchanged. I am committed to ensuring that crime falls, offenders are brought swiftly to justice and victims get the support they need.

This year's budget, despite the financial challenges we continue to face as a nation, is focused on making good the investment we as a community have made to date in policing and making improvements in the areas that matter most to communities.

In addition to my ongoing work around the commissioning of victim services and preventative/diversionary activity, there are three key themes running through my budget for this year – each with the public at the heart.

- Improved visible and accessible policing.
- Better investigations and outcomes.
- Improved public contact.

From engaging with the communities of West Mercia, I know how important these particular areas are. I want the tax paying public to therefore feel an improvement, whether it's an additional 10 police officers, bringing the force's establishment figure to the highest on record; protecting Safer Neighbourhood Team numbers through fewer abstractions; improving the response times for 101 and 999; or making it easier for victims of crime to submit video footage.

Building on the investment from 2023/24, which saw the inception of Neighbourhood Crime Fighting Teams, Community Safety Engagement Officers, and 20 additional police officers, I will continue to support and challenge West Mercia Police to ensure my significant investment in frontline policing is being felt by communities, particularly around visibility and accessibility. However, this also includes the investment I have made in the last three years to recruit 177 additional police officers. Many of these will have either completed their training, or will be close to completion, and will be embarking on gaining the valuable, real-life experience they need in order to police our communities as effectively as possible.

I welcome West Mercia Police's commitment to implement dedicated town centre-based policing teams that are focused on retail and business crime, and ultimately being visible in the areas that are most commonly used by communities.

My commitment to preventing crime and harm, through my commissioning activity, remains and is reflected in this year's budget. In the last year, I have been proud to have secured additional funding from the Government following successful bids to the Home Office. In 2024/25, that funding will be realised as a perpetrator programme, which is focused on challenging behaviours and is rolled out across West Mercia. Safer Streets 5, which I match funded, will see 14 initiatives focused on reducing violence against women and girls, neighbourhood crime and anti-social behaviour. Communities across West Mercia will also see work progressing on the Safer Communities projects, which I am delivering in partnership with local authorities.

This year's budget will also see victims of sexual offences receive a more consistent high standard of service, with specialist officers responding to incidents and ensuring victims are quickly referred to specialist support if needed.

Whilst I am proposing to increase the amount of council tax I am asking the public to pay, I want people to be reassured that I have provided rigorous challenge to West Mercia Police to ensure that the investment in the totality of policing enables the service to be efficient and effective, and deliver a level of service the public expects.

This year's budget proposals are another step forward in the next phase of delivering my Safer West Mercia Plan and ensuring that the communities of West Mercia remain at the heart of policing.



John Campion
Police and Crime Commissioner, West Mercia

Contents

Executive Summary	5
Precept Report 2024/25	6
Local and national challenges	8
Delivery of key objectives & investments in 2023/24	9
Current performance	12
Community engagement and public consultation	14
Delivery of the Safer West Mercia Plan in 2024/25	15
The PCC's commitment to improved visible and accessible policing	16
The PCC's commitment to improving public contact	19
The PCC's commitment to more effective investigations and better outcomes	21
The PCC's commitment to support making a police force that is fit for purpose	23
The PCC's commitment to victims of crime	24
The Revenue Budget	27
The economic context	27
The economic context in relation to West Mercia	27
Sources of funding.....	28
Proposed Revenue Expenditure.....	31
Delivering a Balanced Revenue Budget.....	33
The Medium-Term Financial Strategy	37
The Capital Budget	38
The Reserves Strategy	40
Statement on the Soundness of the Budget & Adequacy of Reserves	42
Compliance with the CIPFA Guidance on key budget principles	42
General reserve	48
Earmarked reserves	52
Capital reserves and balances	53
Summary	53
Appendix A - Summary of West Mercia Grant Settlement	55
Appendix Bi - Subjective analysis of income & expenditure	56
Appendix Bii - Objective analysis of income & expenditure	57
Appendix C – Capital Programme	59
Appendix D – Performance Metrics	61

Executive Summary

This report sets out the proposed budget and precept for decision by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). It delivers one of the PCC’s key responsibilities, under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

The report sets out the:

- Net budget requirement for 2024/25
- Proposed precept for 2024/25
- The community priorities and service improvements that will be delivered for the public as a result of this budget
- Proposed medium term financial strategy 2024/25 to 2028/29
- Outline capital budget 2024/25
- Statement on soundness of the budget and the adequacy of reserves

This budget sets out the allocation of resources to deliver on the objectives in the Safer West Mercia Plan, as well as ensuring that policing delivers on national requirements. The central themes considered are the strategy and vision of the elected PCC and the need to continually improve the entirety of policing across West Mercia.

As part of setting out these financial spending plans, it is important to set out the issues that influence and contribute to the build of the budget for 2024/25 and the medium-term financial strategy. In setting a balanced budget, the PCC recognises that it will build on the decisions made in previous years and is dependent on events which have occurred during the year and which are likely to continue into the new financial year.

This is the current draft position and is subject to change, as a result of the Home Office Funding settlement and public consultation. The PCC will make a recommendation to the Police and Crime Panel on the precept charge for 2024/25 and then make a decision on the total budget before the start of the financial year.

In determining his budget proposals, the PCC acknowledges and considers:

The priorities within the Safer West Mercia Plan	The outcome of public engagement & consultation	The impact of the global economic conditions
National policies and strategies – required to be delivered at a local level	Prudent use of, and contributions to, the financial reserves	Government policy on public spending
The operational advice and guidance provided by the Chief Constable	Medium term financial obligations and policing grant settlement	The Chancellor’s Autumn Spending Review 2024/25
Strategic Policing Requirement	The drive for continuous improvement and value for money	Development of future collaborations and the risks involved

Precept Report 2024/25

DRAFT Precept Recommendations

The PCC is recommended to approve:

- a) A net revenue budget after savings of £288.434m
- b) A contribution of £4.276m is made from reserves
- c) A net budget requirement of £284.158m
- d) A Council Tax for a Band D property at £277.50
- e) A Council Tax for a Band D property calculated as follows:

	£m
Budget Requirement (Net Revenue Expenditure)	284.158
Less Funding	
Police Grant	86.493
Police PUP Grant	
Revenue Support Grant	55.432
Council Tax Support Grant	
Council Tax Freeze Grant	9.200
2013/14	1.976
2011/12	0.800
Sub Total	129.300
Less: Collection Fund Surplus/(deficit)	0.958
Amount required to be raised by Council Tax	129.300
Divided by Aggregate Council Tax Base	465,945.11
Basic Amount of Council Tax at Band D	£277.50

- f) *The consequential Council Tax for each property band will be as follows:*

Band A (6/9th)	185.00
Band B (7/9th)	215.83
Band C (8/9th)	246.67
Band D	277.50
Band E (11/9th)	339.17
Band F (13/9th)	400.83
Band G (15/9th)	462.50
Band H (18/9 th)	555.00

All Figures are rounded to 2 decimal places

- g) *That the Chief Executive to the Office of the PCC for West Mercia be authorised to issue Precepts Notices on the West Mercia billing authorities as follows:*

Bromsgrove District Council	10,544,361.75
Herefordshire Council	19,979,991.68
Malvern Hills District Council	9,170,584.13
Redditch Borough Council	7,302,995.25
Shropshire Council	33,075,549.68
Telford and Wrekin Council	15,699,229.50
Worcester City Council	9,158,055.00
Wychavon District Council	14,683,696.05
Wyre Forest District Council	9,685,305.00
TOTAL	<u>129,299,768.04</u>

h) The reserve strategy set out in pages 38 - 40 of this report

i) The outline capital budget in pages 36 - 38 of this report

j) All officers be instructed to exercise tight budgetary control and individual budget holders should ensure compliance with financial regulations. Caution will be exercised in entering into expenditure which creates additional commitments in future years. The PCC will be kept fully informed of the financial position throughout the year.

k) In approving the budget, the PCC notes the Treasurer's comments in pages 40 – 51 of this report in respect of the robustness of the budget and the adequacy of reserves.

l) That the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) be reviewed and revised by 30th September 2024. As part of this, the business planning and budget setting process will be reviewed and improved.

Prior to April 2024, the Chief Constable will produce and agree with the PCC a detailed plan for the implementation of West Mercia Police element of the budget, including the delivery of the savings required to balance the budget.

PART 1 - The PCC's budget investment proposals 2024/25

Local and national challenges

As outlined in the foreword, the nation has once again faced a year of financial challenges as a result of inflation. This, in turn, has had an impact on the cost of energy and food which has led to rising costs for households.

This impact has been associated with the rise in reports of shoplifting, which has been felt across the country not just in West Mercia. The period April 2023 to the end of August 2023, saw a 48% spike in these offences in West Mercia. This is having a considerable impact on businesses and communities across the three counties.

This highlights that crime continues to be ever-changing, which presents a challenge to policing. Online crime, for example, is accounting for more than 50% of criminal activity within West Mercia. This raises significant challenges for the force, as these offences are often committed by people who live outside of the force area and potentially in other countries.

However, despite the challenges of these particular crime types, overall recorded crime has continued to fall. This is testament to the preventative work that is taking place across West Mercia, as well as the proactive work being done by the specialist teams within the force. It also highlights the importance of a police force being able to quickly adapt to the changing nature of crime to ensure communities are safe and feel safe.

Nationally, one of the biggest challenges continuing to face policing is a threat to the trust and confidence that the public have in the service they receive as well as in police officers. Media coverage continues to feature police forces rooting out officers that are unfit to serve. However, across West Mercia, the PCC's quarterly perceptions surveys indicate that confidence in the police has remained at approximately 80% through 2023/24. While this is a strong foundation, it is important that West Mercia Police increases confidence further by ensuring corrupt police officers are rooted out, the public's priorities are met including crime continuing to fall, and that our police officers are visible and accessible in communities.

Delivery of key objectives & investments in 2023/24

The PCC continues to fund the delivery of his Safer West Mercia Plan under the four main pillars:



Putting victims and survivors first

- Put victims and their voice at the heart of the criminal justice system
- Ensure an appropriate range of support services for every victim
- Early intervention
- Sustainable services



Building a more secure West Mercia

- Reduce crime and reoffending
- Robust response to serious and organised crime
- Improve response around domestic abuse and sexual violence
- Reduce excess harm associated with roads



Reforming West Mercia

- Manage resources to maximise value, effectiveness and meet demand
- Fit for the digital age
- Establish and maintain a clear, strong identity
- Ensure facilities, police and community needs are delivered
- Resources will be prioritised towards front line services
- West Mercia Police will form partnerships in the best interest of local communities



Reassuring West Mercia's communities

- Ensure all communities have a voice that is heard
- Ensure all communities can access their police service
- Ensure West Mercia's local policing community charter delivers on its commitments
- Empower communities
- Ensure all individuals are dealt with fairly, equally and respectfully

In the last financial year, the following key objectives set out in the 2023/24 budget report have been delivered.

Putting victims and survivors first

- The PCC secured a further £1.2m from the Home Office helping to fund DRIVE – a perpetrator programme run by Cranstoun, for all risk levels that is focused on challenging perpetrator behaviour across West Mercia.
- The award-winning knife crime prevention programme 'Steer Clear' was widened across all areas of West Mercia. The programme will provide a

1:1 service for children and young people involved in knife related crime.

- A comprehensive profile has been created around violence against women and girls (VAWG), which highlights victim perceptions as well as data on crime and incidents. These tools allow the force to identify how re-victimisation can be prevented and harm is reduced.
- The PCC recommissioned the Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) service with Worcestershire County Council. 453 users were engaged with in the early part of 2023/24.
- PCC investment went into expanding the Climb project, with the introduction of Early Intervention Practitioners to work with under-10s, who are risk of being exploited by crime, across West Mercia.

Build a more secure West Mercia

- Police officer numbers increased by a further 40 to ensure resource was focused on frontline policing and tackling community concerns. These additional officers took the establishment figure to the highest on record in West Mercia – 2,496.
- Five new Neighbourhood Crime Fighting Teams were launched, on time, in each local policing area. These teams are focused on keeping persistent offenders off the streets and reducing levels of high impact crimes such as anti-social behaviour, drugs, major thefts, and criminal damage.
- Five new VAWG officers have been recruited to pursue offenders and bring them to justice, while ensuring victims receive caring and compassionate support.
- The number of Special Constables are predicted to increase to 120 by the end of the year.
- The Crime and Vulnerability department, funded to the tune of £48.1m, brought offenders to justice following some of the most impactful crimes such as domestic abuse, sexual offences, serious organised crime and online child abuse.
- Investment in technology to ensure that forensics are secured from the first contact and evidence is preserved.

Reform West Mercia

- The PCC featured public contact, specifically the non-emergency (101) and emergency (999) lines, as part of his assurance and accountability agenda.
- The force reduced its reliance on contracted resources by investing in the development of existing staff.
- West Mercia Police rolled out electronic monitoring systems in police vehicles to provide data on their maintenance and performance, as well as vital information regarding the vehicle replacement programme.
- The build of the new fit-for-purpose joint police and fire station in Redditch commenced and is progressing to plan.
- Progress has been made for a new firearms range, which will provide the facility to effectively train firearms officers and bring them in-line with national standards.

- £460k additional investment in the Firearms Licensing Unit with £200k towards recruiting additional firearms licensing officers and £260k for 10 vehicles to assist with visits.

Reassure West Mercia's communities.

- £400k has been committed for the delivery of new average speed camera schemes.
- As part of the Government's 10-year 'From Harm to Hope' plan, £100k has been invested in West Mercia's Combatting Drugs Partnership working with West Mercia Police and local partners to tackle the harm drugs cause.
- Further investment has gone towards developing the Neighbourhood Matters technology, and ensuring the force is focused on utilising the platform to the best of its ability and enabling the best possible engagement with communities.
- The PCC funded 10 Community Safety Engagement Officers to work in the heart of communities and with partners to address concerns.

Current performance

The key performance indicators (KPIs) associated with the annual 2023/24 budget are set out in Appendix D. The PCC and Chief Constable have made a clear commitment to pursue continuous improvements against these KPIs. To ensure a sustained improvement, it has been agreed that the same set of metrics will be utilised in the 2024/25 budget.

The metrics focus on traditional police and crime measures, and crimes that have the greatest impact on communities, such as neighbourhood crime, serious violence, domestic abuse, and criminal justice outcomes for victims. Metrics that enable robust financial management are also included. The metrics are also aligned to the PCC's Safer West Mercia Plan priorities and national Beating Crime Plan priorities, against which the force must deliver improvements. The PCC recognises that these measures are not the full picture but are important considerations.

Below is an overview of monthly performance within West Mercia Police from November 2023. The 999 and 101 comparisons are set against the most recent available data.



- 87% of residential burglary victims were satisfied.
- 76% of hate crime victims were satisfied.
- 79% of domestic abuse victims were satisfied.
- ↓ 62% of violent crime victims were satisfied.



The majority of key crime types saw a reduction:

- ↓ Total recorded crime
- ↓ Violent crime
- ↓ Rape
- ↓ Robbery
- ↓ Domestic abuse
- ↓ Business and Community burglary
- ↓ Vehicle crime
- ↑ Residential burglary

No increase has been seen for:

- 79% of domestic abuse victims were satisfied.

Outcomes

- ↑ Increase in charge/summons (OC1/1A) issued for key crime types.



Reforming
West Mercia

- ↑ 89% of 999 calls were answered within 10 seconds.
- ↑ 56% of 101 calls were answered within 30 seconds.
- 82% of residents have confidence in West Mercia Police.
- 19% of residents report seeing a police officer or PCSO at least once a week.



Reassuring
West Mercia's
communities

- 73% of Grade 1 incidents were attended within 20 minutes.
- ↑ 79% of Grade 2 incidents were attended within 2 hours.
- ✓ Delivery of financial outturn within budget.
- ✓ Delivery of savings plan for the current financial year.

There has been a long-term downward trend in total recorded crime estimates, nationwide, since the beginning of Covid-19 as measured by the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW). However, improvements to recording processes by the police, expansions of offences recorded, more victims reporting crime and genuine increases in some types of crime have made substantial contributions to rises in recorded crime over recent years.

Locally, in West Mercia, when looking at the breakdown of crime year-to-month (April to October) reductions have been seen for most crime types when compared to the same period last year. However, increases have been seen for recorded acquisitive crime, specifically a very small increase in residential burglaries and shoplifting, when compared to the same period in the previous year. Similar trends in increasing volumes were also seen in Most Similar Group (MSG)¹ forces.

Continued scrutiny in outcomes achieved for victims of crime has seen improved levels of action taken including charge/summons by the force across all key crime types. Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a priority for both the PCC and the Government. Positively, the number of recorded rape offences have seen a reduction whilst action taken by the police has increased, above the MSG average. The PCC continues to focus on resources and scrutiny to ensure victims receive a level of service they expect, and that appropriate support is in place to allow those affected to cope and recover.

Whilst the majority of people remain confident that they can contact the police in both an emergency and non-emergency there has been a decline in call handling performance by West Mercia Police. The PCC recognises the public's priority of our police being accessible, and thus that decline in performance is not acceptable. The PCC has invested in additional call handling capacity and supported process

¹ MSGs are groups of police force areas that have been found to be the most similar to each other. For West Mercia these are North Yorkshire, Warwickshire, Gloucestershire, Suffolk, Devon and Cornwall, Wiltshire and Norfolk

enhancements to improve the service the public receives.

The PCC will review performance against the budget KPIs as part of his Assurance and Accountability (A&A) programme. In January 2023, the PCC commissioned a wholesale review of his holding to account function. A number of recommendations were identified to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the holding to account process with a focus on more robust performance management and delivering tangible outcomes and service improvement for communities.

A key recommendation from the review was to reinstate formal quarterly meetings with the Chief Constable with a focus on performance in relation to:

- Local performance priorities (Safer West Mercia Plan and Budget KPIs),
- National policing priorities (Beating Crime Plan metrics), and
- Local and national HMICFRS inspections.

This was implemented in April 2023 and has ensured greater oversight and scrutiny of performance against key metrics on a regular basis.

The budget metrics are considered as part of a wider suite of performance information including HMICFRS. The last police efficiency, effectiveness, and legitimacy (PEEL) inspection for 2021/22 was published in April 2022. During this inspection, HMICFRS identified a cause of concern relating to how West Mercia Police investigates crime, supervises investigations, and updates victims. In July 2023, HMICFRS revisited the force to review progress against this cause of concern. They found that whilst progress had been made, more needs to be done into supervision of investigations.

Community engagement and public consultation

Putting the public's voice at the heart of policing is a key priority for the PCC, as set out in his Safer West Mercia Plan.

To understand the priorities of residents to help inform the 2024/25 budget, the PCC decided to carry out his public consultation through community engagement events, specifically six over the summer months. The events were held in communities across West Mercia.

At each event, attendees were able to identify their top three policing priorities. The priorities chosen were based on the concerns that are raised most often by the public. The options included burglary, VAWG, road safety, rural crime, reducing offending, anti-social behaviour, crime prevention, drugs, supporting victims, and accessibility and visibility.

With more than 1,000 people taking part, the top three priorities highlighted were VAWG (18%), road safety (15%) and visibility and accessibility of police officers (13%).

The PCC and his team also attended freshers' fairs at Redditch, Worcester, and Bromsgrove. More than 300 students raised their priorities as: VAWG (22%), road safety (13.4%) and supporting victims (12.8%).

The PCC has worked hard to engage across all communities, specifically through holding his 'Community Conversation' events. These engagements allow people to

have a greater voice and raise concerns that are affecting how safe they feel where they live. Meetings, such as one that took place in Pershore, enable the PCC to make positive changes and ensure the force are efficiently and effectively tackling the issues that are being raised.

Budget consultation

The budget consultation ran from the 7th December to the 6th January, specifically on the draft precept and budget proposals. In total, 915 responses were received.

A range of communication tools were used to promote the consultation, such as: social media, including local community groups on Facebook; press releases issued to local media; Neighbourhood Matters messaging; parish council newsletters; MP newsletters; and residents' newsletters.

The consultation asked people the following question:

1. Would you be willing to pay, on average, £5.26 (1.99%) more for policing per year based on a band D property?

The majority of respondents (75%) supported this proposed increase, whilst the remaining 25% did not.

For those that answered yes to the above question, a second question was asked:

1. Would you be willing to pay £13 (4.91%) more for policing per year based on a band D property?

Again, around 75% responded yes whilst the remaining 25% said no. Those that agreed to the maximum increase of 4.91% accounted for 56% of the total respondents.

When asked if they had any further comments, 464 respondents chose to respond. The main themes raised within the comments were: financial concerns/cost of living, officer numbers/police visibility, and police response/action.

The PCC has considered the responses from the public in determining the final precept proposal and budget for 2024/25.

Delivery of the Safer West Mercia Plan in 2024/25

Outlined within this section is a snapshot of what will be funded as part of the 2024/25 budget, and the ways in which the budget will support the delivery of the PCC's Safer West Mercia Plan and key concerns of communities.

Building on a successful track record and considerable investment into West Mercia Police, the PCC's £284m policing budget for 2024/25 has a focus on protecting frontline police officer numbers, boosting the accessibility and visibility of police officers, improving public contact and ensuring investigations are improved with better outcomes for victims.

Highest establishment of police officers on record in West Mercia, with 10 additional officers to be based in frontline policing	Increased numbers of Special Constables to support visible policing in the heart of communities	More offenders brought to justice through better quality of investigations	Improved response times for 101 and 999
Protected SNT numbers and fewer abstractions	Reduced domestic abuse and all violence against women and girls	Improved confidence and satisfaction from victims and survivors	Software to support digital/CCTV sharing
Fit-for-purpose policing estates – maintaining presence in local communities	Better use of technology to deliver effective community policing	Further development of partnership projects focused on delivering effective prevention and tackling community concerns	Initiatives to prevent child criminal exploitation

The PCC's commitment to improved visible and accessible policing

- **Record number of police officers**
- **Protected SNT numbers & fewer abstractions**
- **Full recruitment into protected PCSO numbers**
- **Increased numbers of specials – bringing the total to over 150**
- **Town centre policing teams**
- **'All-out' visible policing patrols**
- **Additional resources into vetting new and current police officers and staff**

Data from the PCC's quarterly confidence survey continues to highlight that some communities feel they are not getting the service they expect and deserve, with a focus on the need for officers to be ever-more visible and accessible. In the latest data (Quarter 2), 19% reported that they see a police officer or PCSO at least once a week.

Acknowledging this, the PCC has ensured that investment and resources continue to be directed towards frontline policing. On top of the 566 additional police officers the PCC has funded since 2016, a further ten will be funded as part of the 2024/25 budget. This will bring West Mercia Police's establishment figure to the highest on record – 2,506. The number of PCSOs and Special Constables will also increase, further bolstering community policing. The force is committing to use effective workforce planning to maximise occupancy of PCSO posts throughout the year. There will also be proactive recruitment of Special Constables to over 150. This investment will be protected in 2024/25, following the Home Office's latest provisional funding settlement.

The Chief Constable has made a commitment that Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) numbers will be protected, and communities will see fewer police officers being abstracted from their local SNT teams. This includes the force's commitment to ensure 100% of SNT PC posts are occupied throughout 2024/25. The Chief Constable has committed to using all the available resources to deliver policing at the heart of communities. Having tasked his senior teams to look at the role SNTs, PCSOs, Neighbourhood Crime Fighting Teams (NCFTs) and Special Constables can have in town centre policing teams, a proposal has been put forward. Based on an assessment

of local demography it is proposed that, as a minimum commitment, one PC and one PCSO (rising with population and need) will form a dedicated SNT policing resource located in town centres. There is a vision that placing officers in the heart of the town can have a wide variety of positive impacts, ranging from dealing with shoplifting, anti-social behaviour, and local thefts, to supporting the nighttime economy to be a safe environment. It also allows these teams to work with local businesses and other partners to tackle the areas of concern. There will also be a day of action every month in a local policing area to deliver ‘all-out’ visible policing.

With the introduction of five NCFTs in 2023, further investment will see a final eight officers recruited to bring the teams to full strength by the start of 2024/25. The force’s 10 Community Safety Engagement Officers will be maintained, with proposals that they support the work of new town centre policing teams.

With 177 additional police officers recruited in the last three years, many are still going through the training process before being posted to their new role in a local policing team. Investment will therefore continue to ensure each recruit is equipped with the skills they need in order to become effective and professional police officers.

This is further supported by the investment in the Professional Standards Department (PSD) to ensure that applicants for both police officer and staff roles, looking to join West Mercia Police are vetted properly and in a timely manner before they are recruited. Additional officers placed in PSD will ensure police officers and staff are vetted in a timely way and available to serve the public more quickly. The additional resource will also allow for vetting renewals and reports of concerning behaviour to be dealt with efficiently and appropriately. This supports the wider work around rooting out those who are unfit to serve within the force – ultimately improving the levels of confidence the public can have in those who are there to protect them. The additional resource will also be able to focus on improving the efficiency and timeliness of public complaints.

Delivering on the commitments

The PCC will hold the Chief Constable to account on the commitment to deliver improved visible and accessible policing:

The public have trust and confidence in West Mercia Police to keep them safe/feeling safe	Increase in how often people see a police officer or PCSO a week (PCC’s Perception Survey) – see this increase to average of 25%
	Reduction in total recorded crime
	Increased time spent in hotspot areas
People have better access to services they require	Reduction in total recorded crime
	Improved median response time

Local Policing Community Charter delivers its commitment	Increase in how often people see a police officer or PCSO a week (PCC's Perception Survey) – see this increase to average of 25%
	Increase in level of confidence people have in West Mercia Police – see this increase from average of 80%
Community participation in community safety	Increase in how often people see a police officer or PCSO a week (PCC's Perception Survey) – see this increase to average of 25%
Communities safe from crime, disorder and danger	Increase in how often people see a police officer or PCSO a week (PCC's Perception Survey) – see this increase to average of 25%
	Reduction in shoplifting and increase in crime solved
	Increase in level of confidence people have in West Mercia Police – see this increase from average of 80%
Less harm and more positive outcomes	Reduction in total recorded crime and increase in crime solved
	Increase in victim satisfaction
People have trust and confidence in West Mercia Police	Reduction in vetting times for standard cases
	Increase in level of confidence people have in West Mercia Police – see this increase from average of 80%

The PCC's commitment to improving public contact

- **Commitment to funding staff in the OCC**
- **Restructure of OCC to improve efficiency and performance**
- **Public receive improved and direct access to police via OCC & CRC**
- **Continual improvement in the 101/999 response times**
- **Software to enable the public to share digital/CCTV files**
- **Improvements to enable the public to report crime online**
- **Crime recording at the scene**

While it is vital that police officers embed themselves in the communities they serve, the service communities receive when they contact West Mercia Police is equally important.

The PCC has therefore targeted investment into improving the accessibility of the police, ensuring the public can access services they need in a timely manner and in a way that is convenient to them. Recognising the importance of the public being able to contact the police, the PCC has committed to ensure that the Operational Control Centre (OCC) will be protected. Greater investment will therefore be made into the department to enable service improvements for the public. This will ensure that there is no reduction in the levels of staffing and that there is investment in the systems and processes to ensure phone calls to both the 999 (emergency) and 101 (non-emergency) lines are answered more quickly. There will also be an increase in the number of call-handlers that have served in the police to offer their expertise to those who call.

Whilst there is still progress to be made, call answering times have seen some improvement, which is why the PCC is committing to continue supporting the force in the form of resources within the budget.

Funding will be provided within the budget to maintain increased levels of staff and officer resource within the public contact team. The placement of police officers in public contact roles enables them to provide their knowledge and expertise at the first point of contact, with a view to providing the most appropriate response to a situation.

Following backlogs in the Firearms Licensing Unit, the force has committed to providing a prompt and effective service to new and existing firearms license holders. This will be supported through an increase of 11 PCs in the unit, who will be responsible for reducing waiting times for those seeking a licence whilst not compromising public safety.

Technology will continue to play an important part in the future of how the public and victims of crime interact with the police. This is why, as part of the 2024/25 budget, the PCC has supported the force with bringing in apps and platforms that allow the following:

- Digital media, such as CCTV, doorbell cameras and dash cams, can be uploaded directly by the public. This will save travel time for police officers who need to collect the evidence and would also allow this kind of media to be used as part of an investigation.
- New technology will also enable police officers to capture digital, photographic and video evidence at the scene.

- Apps on police-issued phones and laptops will enable police officers to record details and evidence at the scene and confirm statements with victims and the public immediately. This will speed up investigations, reduce administration and benefit the public through the information being collated straight away, removing the need to sign witness statements at a later date. The force is committed to working towards a minimum of 80% of crimes being recorded within 24 hours.
- Enhancement to the front counter service, through the introduction of digital kiosks, to supplement face-to-face contact and provide 24/7 access to police services.
- Extended use of video conferencing to contact the public quickly in relevant cases, seeing an increase in direct access to police officers at first contact.

Delivering on the commitments

The PCC will hold the Chief Constable to account on the commitment to deliver improved public contact:

Access to services when people require them	Improvements to percentage of 999 calls answered within 10 seconds
	Improvements to percentage of 101 calls answered within 2 minutes
	Improvements to emergency response time
	Improvements to priority response time
Community concerns are acted upon – specific focus on firearms licensing	Reduction in expired certificates
	50% reduction in waiting time for new applications by the end of 2024
Focused on improvement, innovation and value	Increase in victim satisfaction
	Improvements to percentage of domestic abuse cases solved
Less harm and more criminal justice outcomes	Improvements to percentage of total recorded crime solved
	Improvements to percentage of shoplifting crimes solved
Crime reported that may have gone unreported	Increase in victim satisfaction

Victims are kept informed and supported	Improvements to percentage of crime recorded in line with the Victims Code of Practice
	Increase in victim satisfaction
	80% of crimes to be recorded within 24 hours through crime recording at the scene

The PCC’s commitment to more effective investigations and better outcomes

- **Ensuring victims of serious sexual offences get a more consistent high standard of service**
- **Additional officers focused on tackling child abuse**
- **Improvements to files that are submitted to the courts leading to better and faster access to justice**
- **Increased focus and resource on homicide prevention**
- **Reform of digital forensics**
- **Use of publicly available platforms, such as social media, in investigations**
- **Improved outcomes via performance framework**

Supporting the PCC’s ‘Putting Victims First’ commitment within his Safer West Mercia Plan, there is an increased focus on investigations and outcomes for victims within the 2024/25 budget.

Continuing the journey and investment in improving technology, West Mercia Police needs to be able to catch up and keep up with the advanced technology being used by criminals. However, with an ever-increasing proportion of criminal activity taking place online, the force needs to be able to respond to this and make the best use of technology to support investigations. The investment for 2024/25 will see improvements in the force’s ability to interrogate electronic devices to identify criminal activity.

It is just as important that technology that is openly available, is being used as effectively as possible to keep the public safe. The budget enables greater utilisation of Open-Source Intelligence which supports the police in maximising their impact around keeping communities safe, including in relation to some of the crimes that cause the most harm.

The investment will also free up time for police officers, removing the need for them to manually input digital forensic data and wait for results – instead enabling them to return to frontline policing quicker.

This year’s budget will also see a new forensics case management system implemented to speed up examinations and effectively track progress of cases.

Last year, as part of the PCC’s Assurance and Accountability process, the PCC held the Chief Constable to account following an increase in the number of homicides within West Mercia. Building on the investment the PCC previously made into investigations, he is supporting the force by ensuring resources are further protected and technology

and prevention services are also being used to prevent harm. The force will also be working with partners to identify and intervene with those most at risk of involvement in serious violence.

This budget also provides a commitment to support investigations into serious sexual offences and includes an uplift of police officers in key areas, such as investigations into tackling both sexual and criminal and sexual exploitation of children. These additional officers will allow for quicker and more effective intervention with those accessing indecent images of children. Wider action will also be carried out to prevent young people from becoming offenders themselves through awareness raising and diversionary activity.

Understanding the harm caused to victims of serious sexual offences, West Mercia Police have set out a clear commitment to victims to ensure they receive a more consistent high standard of service. This includes:

- Specialist officers will provide first attendance unless an emergency response is required.
- Enhanced specialist training for all new investigators and greater understanding of trauma for all police officers
- An offender focused approach with timely referrals to specialist support for the survivors
- Any examination of a victim’s mobile device will be proportionate, and the device returned within 24 hours. Alternatively, a replacement will be provided.

The PCC is clear that an improvement in the level of service also includes providing victims with regular updates and referrals to appropriate support when needed.

The PCC recognises that victims want to see offenders face the full extent of the law for their crimes. This budget will therefore support the continued efforts to improve the quality of files sent to the Crown Prosecution Service, enabling the commencement of legal proceedings, leading to better and faster access to justice. The force has outlined its ambition to be in the top quartile for the quality of files. The force is also committing to greater use of diversionary and out-of-court remedies.

Delivering on the commitments

The PCC will hold the Chief Constable to account on the commitment to deliver more effective investigations and better outcomes:

Victims are kept informed and supported, and recover from the harm suffered	Increase in victim satisfaction – specifically relating to rape offences
	Increase in crime solved – specifically rape
	Increase in percentage of cases with specialist officer deployed

Victims are safeguarded from being re-victimised	Quicker action to safeguard children
More positive criminal justice outcomes	Increase in percentage of compliant pre-charge files (75%)
Communities safe from crime, disorder and danger	Reduction in harm caused – in relation to Op Freya (homicide prevention)
	Reduction in serious violence
Focused on improvement, innovation and value	Quicker action to safeguard children
	Reduced digital forensic turnaround times
	Increase in percentage of total recorded crime solved
More positive criminal justice outcomes	Increase in percentage of total recorded crime solved
	Increase in percentage of shoplifting crimes solved and victim satisfaction
	Improvements to priority response time

Detailed plans around all the commitments set out, and achievement of service improvements, will be developed and agreed between the PCC and the Chief Constable. The PCC is then able to hold the Chief Constable to account for delivery.

The PCC’s commitment to support making a police force that is fit for purpose

The PCC, as custodian of the police estate, is ramping up his focus on exploring opportunities to deliver further efficiencies. This does not mean service will be compromised, nor will communities be negatively impacted, instead it is about thinking smarter to ensure that public money is being used to improve the service communities receive from West Mercia Police.

Most recently, an example of this kind of efficiency is the joint station currently being built in Redditch in partnership with Herefordshire and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue Service. Progress will continue on the construction of the new joint police and fire station which is on course to be completed in 2025. The station is being built to better support local residents by placing emergency services in the heart of Redditch, ensuring better value for taxpayers’ money, and enabling emergency services to work more closely together.

The sharing of buildings and facilities will continue to be explored in other parts of West Mercia, with co-locations being identified with local authorities, libraries, and other

community partners.

To deliver greater efficiencies and support the PCC's commitment to reducing the carbon footprint, there will be changes to how offices use electricity. Less expensive LED lighting will be installed across many buildings across the force area. There will also continue to be the rollout of electric charging across the police estate as the fleet increases its use of environmentally friendly vehicles, whilst also reducing running costs.

The PCC's commitment to victims of crime

The PCC currently holds a £7.5m budget for the commissioning of specialist support services to ensure victims of crime get the help they need, and crime and reoffending can be prevented.

Safer Communities

Last year, the PCC committed to build on the Safer Communities project in Telford & Wrekin by working with other local authorities across West Mercia to roll out similar community partnership projects.

The objectives for each project are tailored to the individual county with a total of £2 million prioritised and committed by the PCC until 2025. This funding is split between top tier councils in Worcestershire, Herefordshire, and Shropshire. Local authorities have matched this funding and all four partnerships have started work to deliver results for local communities.

Areas will focus on projects that are of particular concern to their communities, such as:

- Tackling substance misuse
- Tackling anti-social behaviour
- Prevention of child criminal exploitation
- Prevention of child sexual exploitation
- Early intervention and prevention initiatives

In addition to this, the PCC's partnership with Telford & Wrekin Council has been renewed with further investment allocated for this initiative, along with £200,000 for collaborative working with the six district authorities in Worcestershire.

Domestic abuse

The harm caused from domestic abuse can be devastating, not just for the victim but also for other family members – including children. This harm can have a lasting impact on all those affected, which is the drive for the PCC to want to make a change by tackling the issue at the root cause.

The PCC will therefore continue to fund DRIVE, the high-risk perpetrator behavioural change programme. After jointly recommissioning the service in 2022 with Herefordshire Council and Worcestershire County Council, a three-year contract was awarded to service provider Cranstoun, with an annual investment of £0.6m. A further £1m has been committed over the next two years to expand the DRIVE service into Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire.

This year, the PCC, with support from Herefordshire Council and Worcestershire County Council, secured £1.2million of Home Office funding to support the rollout of an early intervention domestic abuse behavioural change programme called Men and Masculinities. Awarded to Cranstoun after a successful pilot, the programme offers holistic wrap around support provision for victims and their families, with outcomes measured from a victim's perspective. This programme will continue into 2024/25.

Expanding in 2023/24, the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) service has seen the creation of specialist inclusive roles to encourage domestic abuse awareness and reporting amongst underrepresented groups and to provide specialist support to those with protected characteristics. The PCC has committed to continuing to fund the service in 2024/25 with a further £1.1m to ensure support for high-risk victims and survivors of domestic abuse.

Knife crime

To help combat knife related crime across West Mercia, the PCC committed £0.5m in 2023 to deliver the Steer Clear programme until March 2025. The Knife Education and Diversion programme, that has a whole family approach, created six new roles across West Mercia and follows a trusted adult approach with 1:1 support and a group workshop element.

The sessions give young people, between the ages of 10 and 17, a safe space to talk about their involvement in knife crime and make supported steps to change.

Road safety

At the heart of the PCC's Safer West Mercia Plan is a focus on further reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured on West Mercia's roads.

Resources within West Mercia Police dedicated to road safety will be further improved in 2024/25. This includes protected officer numbers and further enhancements to civilian staff and enforcement capacity within the road safety team via investment in technology such as TruCam.

Projects that the PCC has already committed funding to, and have had proven successes, will continue in 2024/25. Such as MORSE, RoadPeace and Pathfinder.

Following the completion of a Roads Safety Needs Assessment, £0.250m has been ringfenced for an open grant round for communities to apply to implement safer roads initiatives in their area. The PCC will also support the introduction of average speed camera schemes in a number of areas across West Mercia.

More than a half a million (£636,541) will be made available to Community Safety Partnerships, which will help to fund community initiatives in all local policing areas. The Commissioner's Community Fund will also reopen with £0.150m available to Superintendents across West Mercia Police to fund projects to tackle localised problems aligning to the Safer West Mercia Plan objectives.

The Revenue Budget

The economic context

On 22 November, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Jeremy Hunt, announced the Autumn Statement 2023 in a speech in the House of Commons. The Statement was accompanied by the Office of Budget Responsibility's Economic and Fiscal Outlook.

In October, inflation was 4.7% (CPI) falling from 6.7% in August. This means that the Prime Minister has officially met his target to halve inflation (from 10.1%) by the end of the year. The Bank of England state that they expect inflation to be back to around 2% by the end of 2025. The Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) raised interest rates to 5.25% in September 2023. The MPC has voted to keep rates at this level into January 2024. The Governor of the Bank said that they forecast interest rates to stay at 5.25% until Autumn 2024 before gradually falling to 4.25% by the end of 2026.

Wages and salaries showed growth of 7.2% in 2022 and in 2023. Future wage growth has been revised back down reflecting the expected fall in inflation to 3.8% in 2024. Despite the factors above, there is still a prediction that unemployment will increase slightly to just over 4.5% in 2024 staying at that rate until it begins to fall in 2026. The Chancellor announced that from April 2024 the Government's National Living Wage will rise to £11.44, a 9.8% increase. The Chancellor has also extended this rate to include all those aged over 21 for the first time.

GDP figures show that the UK avoided recession in 2023 with growth of 0.6%. The forecast is that growth will remain low through 2024 and 2025 when it is predicted to return to pre-pandemic levels of GDP growth at a rate of 2%.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, forecasts for public sector net debt (PSND) peaked at 109.7% of GDP in 2023-24. These figures had since been revised numerous times and now show a peak of 98.6% in 2024-25. This in part reflects the improved GDP figures set out above.

Within the Autumn Statement there was limited reference to policing, crime, or justice. The statement did refer to the publication by the Home Office of the 'Policing Productivity Review'. The review states that there are a range of proposals, from building on recently introduced measures that cut unnecessary bureaucracy, to driving greater productivity through the adoption of new and improved technology. According to the Government, if all these suggestions were implemented, they could save up to 38m hours of police officer time per year.

The economic context in relation to West Mercia

The Autumn Statement did not indicate any additional resourcing being made available for policing above what was already included in the three-year spending review published in October 2021.

The predictions within the Autumn Statement for inflation/interest rates and pay awards are consistent with the assumptions that have been made in the budget. The 7% pay award agreed for September 2023 for policing reflects the wage growth figures identified in the OBR report. The future pay growth of 3.8% is higher than used in planning the budget. Pay inflation is included at 2.5% which closely reflects general inflation predictions for the economy and reflects what is considered affordable, given the additional grant amount provided from the Home Office. The budget has been updated to reflect the increase in National Living Wage. This impacts on contractors used by West Mercia, rather than on any salary scales for our employees. The main announcement in the Autumn Statement, relating to the reduction in National Insurance, is positive for the employees of West Mercia. However, employer contribution levels remain unchanged and therefore does not reduce the wage increase assumptions identified in the budget.

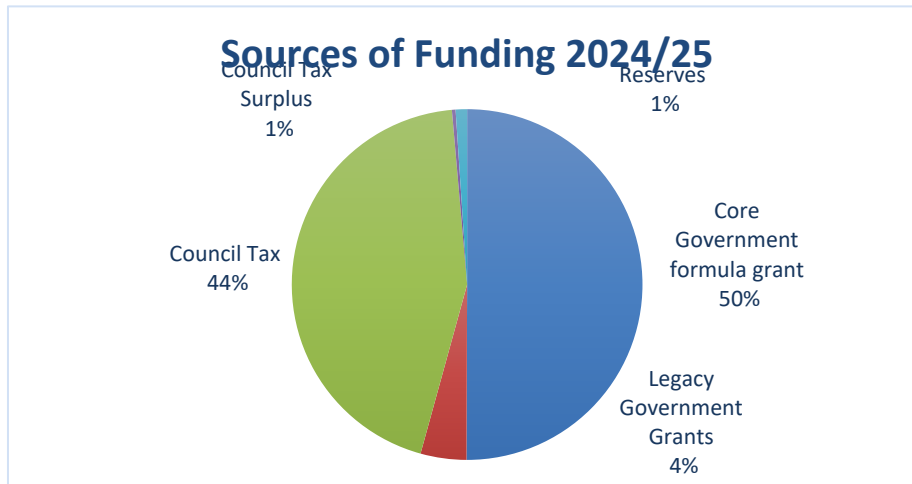
Given that growth in funding available is expected to be minimal, the force has focused on delivering efficiencies. As described through this paper the investment in technology is important. It supports the new ways in which we can work to realise improvements in efficiency and productivity. West Mercia is still on that journey, and 2024/25 is expected to see many of the benefits realised. However, by implication there is further investment required.

With the publication of the provisional financial settlement by the Home Office on the 14th December 2023 there was some welcome additional resource made available above that set out the SR21. There was additional resourcing for the pay award, for the impact of the increasing cost of Police Pensions, and to support the continued uplift in officers. The draft settlement provided an additional £1m of funding above what had been expected, reducing some of the pressure on the budget.

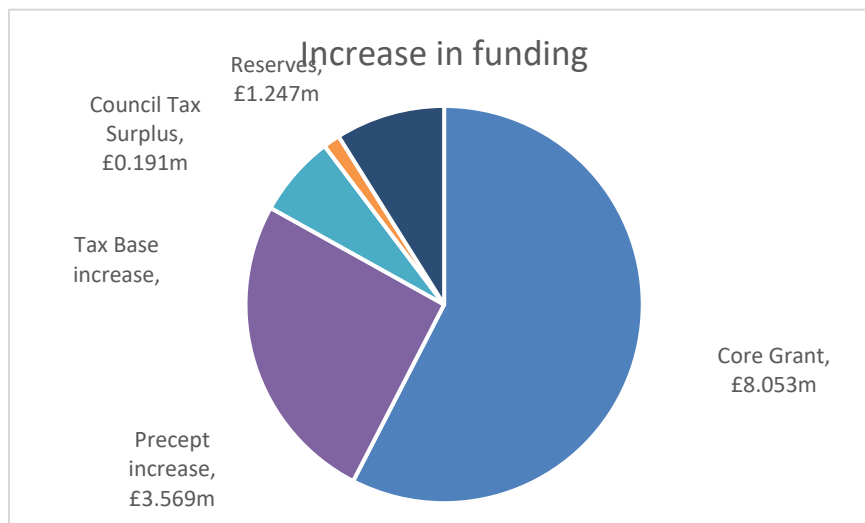
Sources of funding

Funding of £283.5m has been identified to support the net revenue expenditure of West Mercia in 2024/25. The PCC's medium term financial strategy (2023/24) included a projected increase in council tax precept of 1.99% in 2024/25. This projection has been used in calculating the funding available, and formed part of the consultation the PCC undertook with local communities.

54% of the total funding comes from central government, principally the Home Office formula grant. The remaining 46% is derived from local taxpayers and reserves. The sources of this funding are shown in the chart below:



The proposed funding has increased by £13m or 4.75% from the previous financial year. This is comparable to the current inflation rate, and the assumed rate for March 2024. The chart below shows where the increase in funding has come from.



*note that treatment of PUP Grant has changed between 2023/24 (included as part of funding) & 2024/25 (included in Revenue Expenditure as part of service income) which means that direct comparison of funding between years will not show the increase of £13m.

Government grants

The PCC receives over half of the funding to support policing in West Mercia from central Government, specifically the Home Office. The Home Office annual revenue settlement has previously followed the increases set out in the three-year Spending Revenue 2021 (SR21). This is the third year of that settlement which sets the Home Office department revenue spending limit increase at 0.6% which is worth an additional £0.8m to West Mercia.

The Provisional Funding Settlement from the Home Office on the 14th December 2023 confirmed the detail of the annual funding for 2024/25. Whilst it confirmed the uplift in line with the spending review, it also announced additional funding available to support the increase costs of police pensions and a commitment to the additional 20,000 police officers recruited in the last 3 years. There was also confirmation that Forces who have agreed to recruit additional officers above their original uplift target would receive continued support. The impact for West Mercia was that the grant funding announced in

provisional funding settlement was just over £1m more than had been expected to support the revenue budget.

The provisional statement also confirmed, as expected, that the Home Office will separately provide funding for the 2024/25 impact of the 7% pay award agreed for implementation in September 23. The Home Office announced that they would fund the financial impact, above 2.5% through to the end of March 2025.

Income received from Council Tax

In 2023/24 PCCs were permitted to increase the precept charge to the public by a maximum of £15.00, up from the original £10.00 limit set out in the SR21. It was announced on the 5th December 2023 (in the local government finance policy statement 2024/25) that PCCs will have a flexibility to increase Council Tax precept by £13.00 for a Band D equivalent property for 2024/25. An increase above this limit would require the PCC to hold a referendum. For West Mercia that would provide a total of £6.0m of additional funding.

The projection by the OBR is that between 2022/23 and 2028/29 receipts are expected to increase by a total of 38.7%, equivalent to a yearly average increase of 5.6%. Of which 4.6% is related to increased precept level and 1.0% due to an increased taxbase

The Tax Base

The tax base is the number of properties that have a council tax charge placed on them. The base increases with additional houses being built and is reduced by factors such as claimants of Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTS) and through discounts awarded, including single person discounts or empty property relief.

The economic forecast is for minimal growth over the medium term. There is therefore a low expectation that there will be a significant increase in housebuilding and that other factors, such as unemployment, will also remain static. These factors are likely to restrict the level of growth in the tax base. The assumption was that the tax base will increase by 1.7%, which is slightly below the West Mercia average since 2016. However following confirmation from the nine Billing Authorities in the West Mercia region, the actual increase in the base is only 0.92%. The impact of this is that the funding will be nearly £1m less than estimated, offsetting the additional funding received in the provisional funding settlement. It appears that a combination of depressed house building, expectation that collection rates will fall and more people claiming exemptions have resulted in the lower-than-expected increase. The rate of growth in the tax base is worth an additional £1.1m of funding.

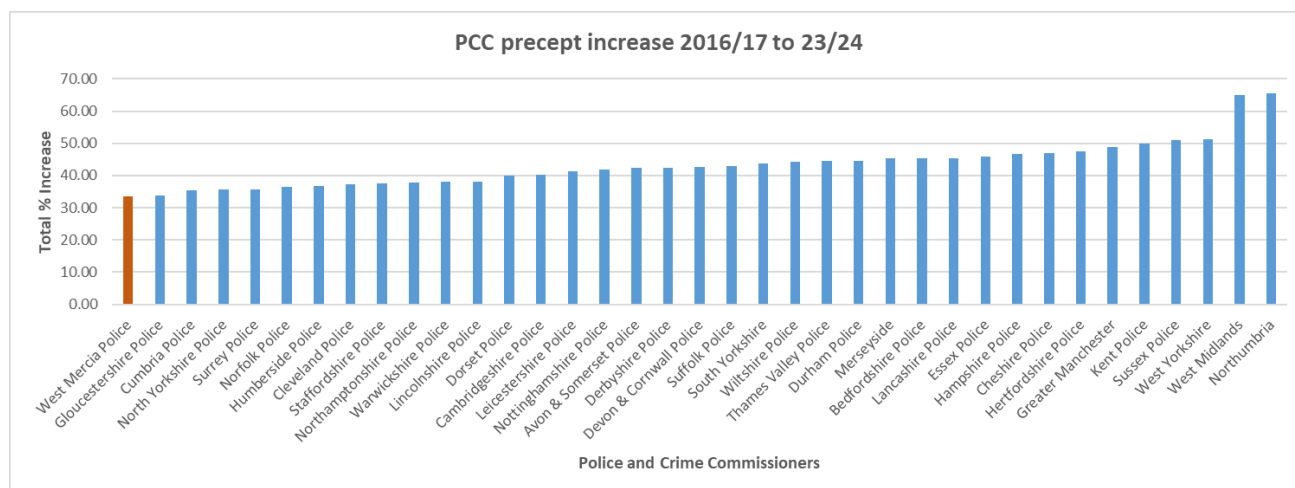
The Precept

The PCC has recognised that there will need to be an increase in Council Tax to support the Force to meet its obligations to fund pay awards and increases in prices for goods and services. The PCC is also clear in his continued support for the investment in making West Mercia fit for purpose and to improve services.

The PCC had set out projections in the medium-term financial strategy to raise the precept by 1.99% in 2024/25, which is worth an additional £2.6m of resources to fund services and which is included in the increase in funding shown above.

It was announced on the 5th December 2023 that PCCs can increase Council Tax precept by £13.00 for a Band D equivalent property for 2024/25. Therefore, the PCC could make the choice to further increase the Council Tax precept, which would raise an additional £3.6m in funding to support provision of services to the public in delivering the Safer West Mercia plan.

The PCC is conscious of the pressure that council tax places on households. The PCC has the lowest percentage increase in council tax of all force areas in England and Wales since 2016/17 when he was first elected as West Mercia PCC.



The Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit

The administration of the council tax system is undertaken by local authorities through the Collection Fund account. This records the amount of income collected and the amount that has been precepted out to fund councils, police and fire. Each year there is a calculation of whether this account is in surplus or deficit. It is usual that there is a surplus, which is then shared back proportionally to each precepting body. The assumption when setting the budget was that the PCCs proportion of the surplus relating to 2023/24 will be circa £1.0m, which increases the total available to fund services. Following confirmation in January 2024 from the Billing Authorities the actual surplus included in the funding is £0.957m, which is just slightly below the original estimate that had been made.

Proposed Revenue Expenditure

The proposed revenue expenditure budget for 2024/25 financial year is £290.4m which would be an increase in expenditure of £17.7m from the previous year.

2023/24 net revenue budget	£272.768m
Price and pay inflation	£15.856m
Service level demand	£5.042m
Identified efficiencies	(£3.235m)
2024/25 net revenue budget requirement	£290.431m

The force has used a process of Priority Based Planning (PBP) to review all of their budgets, and which provides a framework to identify changes to costs. The principal factors which drive changes in the budget requirement are:

The impact of inflation

- A total of £15.9m has been identified as the additional cost of inflation (5.8%) which is a reduction of £1.5m on the previous year.
- The increase includes an assumption of 2.5% pay award in September 2024
- It also reflects the higher-than-expected pay award of 7% agreed in September 23, which had not been included in the 2023/24 budget. A grant from the Home Office has been provided to offset some of the impact.
- The budget recognises a £15.1m increase in cost solely as a result of maintaining the establishment, compared to their costs in 2023/24.
- Non pay inflation relating to the purchase of individual goods and services from suppliers is expected to add an additional £0.7m to the budget.

Demand lead pressures on services that result in increased annual costs

- There is a projected £2.6m increase in the revenue cost to finance the repayment of principal and to service interest payments. This is due to the high level of capital spend in 2023/24 on projects such as the Digital Services Transformation (DST) programme and the commencement of the building of a new police station. With limited capital receipts that can be generated and restricted capital support from the Home Office there are few options as to how this vital investment is funded other than from borrowing. The cost of which is further compounded by increasing interest rates.
- There was an announcement from HM Prisons in October 23 that they will be ending their arrangement with Police Forces to manage demand pressure on prisons. Therefore, the planning assumption is that there will be a loss of a £1.1m revenue stream that supported the revenue budget in 2023/24.
- Suppliers have indicated that there will be £1.5m increase in the annual costs of procuring software and system licences related to vital digital services. This is being challenged by the Digital Services and Contracts & Procurement team to ensure that the Force is achieving best value from contracts.
- There is an additional £0.8m of notified cost relating to pension payment obligations, which the Police are responsible for paying.

Efficiencies that can be made whilst maintaining the level of service that the force currently provides.

- This includes £0.5m from reduction in the cost of fuel required to operate the fleet as prices reduce and the requirement to travel decreases through effective management of the fleet. Also, the force has the ability to use mobile technology and more meetings can be attended virtually through the use of technology reducing the need to travel.
- £0.4m delivered through more effective procurement of services
- £0.3m of further reductions in costs achieved from bringing the management of equipment and uniform in house, cancelling the contract with the external provider. This is in addition to the £0.2m delivered in 2023/24.
- Release of £0.1m of costs by decommissioning ICT equipment, as a result of the DST programme.

Delivering a Balanced Revenue Budget

Based on the proposed level of service expenditure of £290.4m and the projected funding (assuming a 1.99% precept increase, per the medium-term financial strategy), of £283.5m there is currently a budget gap of £6.9m.

The increase in funding from central government, worth an additional £8.1m, is not sufficient to meet the inflation increases identified for 2024/25. It also does not provide resource to support increasing demands for service, or appetite for service improvements. Consideration is required around continuing the important investment programme West Mercia has in its infrastructure to ensure it is fit for the future. With the addition of a projected Council Tax precept rise of 1.99% and other assumed increase in funding, there is still a short fall to meet the required expenditure.

The PCC has set the priorities for policing in West Mercia as part of the Safer West Mercia Plan, particularly visible front-line policing, improving public contact and better investigations. The PCC has requested that the Chief Constable ensures resources are utilised effectively and to provide operational advice as to how performance and outcomes in these key areas are delivered for the public. However as there is a budget gap the force has therefore undertaken an evaluation of all its budgets to ensure that they focus on delivery of core objectives, that demand pressures are challenged to ensure that they are realistic and that all available efficiencies have been identified. The Chief Constable tasked the Deputy Chief Constable to lead panel working groups to review and scrutinise all aspects of the budget and to challenge budget holders to confirm that each budget line proposal is accurate and reasonable.

The Chief Constable has provided reassurance to the PCC that the proposed level of expenditure of £290.4m is the level required to deliver the PCC’s priorities and effective policing across the whole of West Mercia, along with desired improvements in performance. The PCC therefore needs to consider the options available to set a balanced budget. These include:

- Delivery of reductions in the level of expenditure
- Additional resources made available from government funding.
- Use of reserves or underspends
- Increasing in the council tax precept.

In preparing the budget it has been recognised at an early stage that there was likely to be a budget gap. The Force have already proposed efficiencies in the service provision for 2024/25, whilst also achieved a savings plan target of over £12.0m in 2023/24. Therefore, the options available for delivering further reductions in expenditure are reduced, and in some cases are only enabled by further investment.

The Force have reviewed how reductions in planned expenditure can be delivered whilst minimising the impact on service and performance. These plans have been prioritised and presented as options to the PCC to consider in order to balance the budget, incorporating the operational advice from the Chief Constable. The PCC has in turn scrutinised these options, seeking further information and reassurance on how their potential impact to the public is minimised.

In total potential reductions in planned expenditure of £10.7m have been identified and a risk assessment made of the possible impact on performance and service delivery.

Potential options for reducing service level expenditure to ensure a balanced budget	Potential reduction in expenditure £m	Cumulative reduction in expenditure £m
--	--	---

Proposals which are considered to have a limited impact on front line policing and services to the public.	2.410	2.410
Proposals which may require consideration of wider redeployment of Police Officer and may hinder the force's ability to deliver performance improvements	2.672	5.082
Proposals with a high probability to impact on front line visible policing and which are a risk to delivery of services and performance	5.618	10.700
Total	10.700	

To reduce expenditure to meet the full budget deficit of £6.8m, it would require taking reductions from each category. This would include taking some of the plans which have been identified as having a high probability of impacting on front line visible policing and risks the ability of the Force to deliver services and expected performance levels.

Another potential option to the PCC is to utilise underspends which may occur in the current financial year or to draw down funds from reserves to support the delivery of a balanced budget. Ideally these would be used to support initiatives to further transform the organisation, which would result in a future reduction in the budget requirement. This is because these sources of revenue funding are not likely to be sustainable on a recurring basis. It is still uncertain what, if any, underspends will occur.

In addition to the above, there is also the option to use the additional flexibility the PCC is afforded on increasing the Council Tax precept. The maximum flexibility has been set by central government at a £13.00 increase in 2024/25 for a typical Band D property. This would represent an increase of 4.9% above the 2023/24 charge. It would provide an additional £3.6m to support revenue expenditure above the level already included in the funding proposed. In his consultation on the budget, the PCC sought public views on both the 1.99% precept increase projected in the medium-term financial strategy and the maximum of £13.00. As set out in the consultation response earlier in the report, the majority of respondents supported the maximum increase.

The PCC is focused on delivering his Safer West Mercia Plan and directing resources into the core elements of his priorities for the 2024/25 budget, namely.

- Improved visible, accessible policing.
- Better investigations with better outcomes
- Improved Public Contact

Based on this commitment and following the consultation with the Public and partners, the PCC has decided that the most effective way to deliver a balanced budget, to protect services and deliver effective policing for the public is the following

2024/25 Budget Deficit

£6.882m

Increase Council tax precept to £13.00	£3.586m
Force carry forward of underspend from 2023/24	£0.650m
Use of reserves	£0.649m
Agreed reductions in service expenditure	£1.690m
Service reductions/ use of reserves to be finalised	£0.308m
Remaining deficit	£0.000m

The PCC believes that maximising the precept is important in ensuring that policing services are able to deliver the priorities set out in the Safer West Mercia Plan, and in doing so avoids making significant cuts within policing and enables service improvements in some key areas.

The PCC has an agreement within the Corporate Governance Arrangements that the Force can carry forward 0.25% of the annual force revenue budget if an underspend is reported in any year. This is worth approximately £0.650m. The Force have committed to utilising this relatively small resource to support the base budget in 2024/25, if it is realised.

The PCC has reviewed the proposed saving plans put forward by the Force and its impact on services to the public. The PCC has also considered the cost effectiveness of delivering that saving, which could include significant one off costs. In the view of the PCC there was a savings proposal where it would be preferable to use £0.6m of reserves to fund the expenditure in 2024/25, rather than using a proportion of that reserve to meet the costs associated with delivering that part of the savings plan.

The identified reduction in service expenditure of £1.7m represents under 1% of the proposed expenditure budget. The PCC is aware of the impact that this will have on West Mercia. However, if the PCC did not take the option to maximise the precept the requirement to make further savings would only increase, therefore damaging effectiveness and efficiency for the public.

There remains £0.4m where the PCC and Force are in the process of making the final agreement of which options the PCC agrees to be implemented to balance the budget. This is expected to be completed by early February.

Savings may be delivered via vacant posts and the PCC is clear that the Force should explore all options in respect of other efficiencies that may be achievable.

Below is how the budget has been built for 2024/25, taking into account the actions that have been taken to balance the budget. They reflect the increase funding from Council Tax precept and from utilisation of reserves. The expenditure for the financial year is set at £288.4m. The table showing the principal movements in expenditure and income between the two financial years.

	2023/24 Budget	Inflation	Demand & Efficiency	2024/25 Budget	Variance
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Government Grant (Core Funding)	150.147	0.803	2.950	153.900	3.753

Council Tax Precept	122.891	5.996	1.371	130.258	7.367
Total Funding / Net Budget Requirement	273.038	6.799	4.321	284.158	11.120
Police Officer Pay	138.623	8.622	5.050	152.295	13.672
Police Officer overtime	2.773	0.113	-0.193	2.693	-0.080
Police Staff Pay	71.605	5.469	3.553	80.627	9.022
PCSO Pay	7.617	0.899	0.263	8.779	1.162
Police Staff overtime	0.531	0.020	-0.048	0.503	-0.028
Temporary and Agency Staff	0.113	0.000	-0.029	0.084	-0.029
Injury & Ill Health Pensions	3.599	0.111	0.232	3.942	0.343
Other Employee Expenses	2.511	0.044	-0.280	2.275	-0.236
Premises	11.485	-0.060	0.395	11.820	0.335
Transport	4.831	0.052	-0.369	4.514	-0.317
Supplies & Services	33.920	0.881	-2.271	32.530	-1.390
Third Party Payments	20.387	0.435	1.203	22.025	1.638
Intergroup Services	0.000	0.026	2.179	2.205	2.205
Capital Financing	7.794	0.000	3.748	11.542	3.748
Gross Expenditure	305.789	16.612	13.433	335.834	30.045
Income	-28.721	-0.694	*-17.985	-47.400	-18.679
Net Force Budget / Expenditure / Variance	277.068	15.918	13.433	288.434	11.366
Funding from Reserves	4.030	0.000	0.246	4.276	0.246
Net Budget after Reserves	273.038	15.918	13.187	284.158	11.120

* £4.3m in relating to Police Officer Uplift Programme in 2023/24 has been reclassified as income. It had previously been shown as Funding.

Further details on the 2024/25 budget are set out in Appendix B which outlines a summary of the expenditure by both subjective and objective analysis.

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy

It is important to consider the financial sustainability of the organisation going forward. Therefore, the annual revenue budget is considered as part of the Medium-Term Financial strategy (MTFS) of the organisation to ensure that spending plans are affordable. Projecting into the future the MTFS has identified the following levels of expenditure and funding:

	2023/24 MTFS £m	2024/25 MTFS £m	2025/26 MTFS £m	2026/27 MTFS £m	2026/27 MTFS £m
Government Grant (Core Funding)	150.147	153.900	157.448	161.085	164.813
Council Tax Precept	122.891	130.258	135.624	140.838	143.622
Funding from Reserves	4.03	4.276	0.044	-0.044	0.000
Total Funding / Net Budget Requirement	277.068	288.434	293.116	301.879	308.435
Employment Costs					
Police Officer Pay and Allowances	141.396	154.988	159.151	163.534	167.621
Police Staff Pay	71.633	80.627	82.294	84.388	86.441
PCSO Pay	7.617	8.779	8.999	9.224	9.454
Other Employee Expenses	6.726	6.804	6.901	7.141	7.276
Other Costs					
Premises	11.485	11.820	11.951	12.109	12.269
Transport	4.831	4.514	4.552	4.631	4.709
Supplies and Services	33.92	32.530	33.809	34.966	35.611
Third Party Payments	20.387	22.025	22.143	22.362	22.571
Intergroup Services	0.000	2.205	0.000	0.000	0.000
Capital Financing	7.794	11.542	13.165	13.845	13.945
Gross Expenditure	305.789	335.834	342.965	352.200	359.897
Income	-28.721	-47.400	-45.800	-45.986	-46.185
Net Force Budget / Expenditure / Variance	277.068	288.434	297.165	306.214	313.712
Savings Required	0	0.000	-4.049	-4.335	-5.277

It should be noted that the savings targets are cumulative. Based on the future projections it is recognised that further work is required through 2024/25 to understand costs and to ensure that the strategic plan for West Mercia is clear and that the business models that support these aims are financially viable. However, the deficits identified are not considered to be a significant risk and will be managed through strategic planning over the period.

The key working assumptions relating to changes in expenditure and funding in the MTFS are as follows:

Funding

The precept is currently proposed to increase by 4.91% in 2024/25 and 1.99% thereafter across the remainder of the medium term.

Council tax base will increase by 0.92% in 2024/25 and then increase by 2.12% in the following year and then 1.99% across the medium term.

Government grant uplift of 6.02% has been included for 2024/25 and then at a rate of 2.5% over the next spending review period.

These assumptions have considered previous increases in West Mercia, and reference to information based on the OBR predictions on economic growth.

Costs

Future years pay increases have been modelled using information available from the OBR provided in the Autumn Statement 2023 and statements made by ministers, per the table below.

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Pay Assumptions	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%

Inflation assumptions contained within the MTFS have been reviewed and allocated as per the table below.

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Inflation	3.0%	1.6%	1.9%	1.9%

Energy prices remain volatile. West Mercia Energy have provided an initial budget for 2024/25, the result of which is a small reduction in projected costs, but which is not falling back to similar prices seen in January 2021. The assumption is that there will be no significant decreases in prices going forward.

The Capital Budget

The capital budget for 2024/25 has been prepared based on bids for capital funding by each department across West Mercia Police. These have been considered against public benefit and affordability. Capital bids are scrutinised by the Force leadership team to ensure that they reflect the Safer West Mercia Plan and policing priorities, that timescales and costings are reasonable, and that consideration is given to the overall return on that investment. All existing capital programme projects have been updated to reflect where spend is predicted to continue into 2024/25.

Since the 2023/24 capital budget was set in November 2022 there has been a significant change in the revenue impact of the capital programme, principally in relation to the planned external borrowing required to finance the programme. Interest rates have steadily increased through to a rate of 5.25% in October 2024, as inflation has remained higher for longer than originally expected. This means that borrowing is having a proportionally higher impact on revenue than in previous years. Because of this a review of the capital strategy has been undertaken and a series of guiding principles have been proposed to ensure that the capital programme is financially sustainable over the medium term. The updated capital strategy is to be discussed at the West Mercia Governance Board in January 2024.

The total requests for funding in 2024/25 are at risk of being higher than what is considered affordable, having regard to the revised capital strategy. The proposed programme reflects the priorities of the PCC to transform and reform police activities, services and systems as quickly and effectively as possible. It recognises the need to modernise ICT systems and further develop the estate to ensure that policing responds to changes in demand and the nature of crime.

The budget has been built by balancing the need to continue to make investment West Mercia whilst not threatening the viability of the revenue budget. The PCC is considering capital investment of £40.8m for 2024/25.

Capital Programme 24/25	£m
Digital Services Transformation	4.633
Change Programme	5.115
DS Replacement Programme	0.750
Fleet Replacement Programme	5.763
Estates Programme	24.504
Other	0.056
Total Capital Programme	40.821

The capital budget is an outline commitment to inform future planning, borrowing decisions and assessment of the revenue impact. Final approval of any individual scheme is subject to a full business case being approved by the PCC. The capital budget may change as a result of business cases being progressed to full proposals.

Currently £19.1m of the plan is either a fully approved business case or part of delegated approvals to deliver spend. This leaves £21.7m of the plan which is either only partially approved or requires a business case. It is recognised that this £21.3m is at greater risk of not being delivered in the financial year.

The expected funding of the programme is outlined below. The PCC has a limited level of capital receipts that can be effectively realised, or revenue reserves from which to pay for capital schemes. The sizeable proportion of funding is from borrowing, which the PCC is very aware creates an ongoing revenue cost, where the principal and interest costs must be repaid. The PCC has made a commitment to make sure that the capital programme remains affordable. The long-term strategy includes increasing the funding of short life capital assets from the revenue budget. Where schemes are funded from borrowing, the focus is on ensuring that it provides a return on that investment to offset revenue cost from borrowing.

The level of borrowing for the capital programme needs to be based on capital investment plans that are affordable, prudent and sustainable as described in the capital strategy.

Capital Funding 24/25	£m
Capital receipts	4.000
Revenue Contribution to Capital	1.600
External Borrowing	35.221
Total Funding	40.821

Government regulations require the PCC to approve the investment and borrowing strategies and borrowing limits for 2024/25 prior to the start of the financial year. This is incorporated within an over-arching Treasury Management Strategy which is reviewed by the Joint Audit and Standards Committee each year and approved at the West Mercia Governance Board.

To demonstrate that the objectives of affordability, prudence and sustainability have been achieved, the Prudential Code requires indicators to be determined by the PCC. These are designed to support and record local decision making and for comparison over time. They are not designed to be comparative performance indicators. These are included within the strategy to support the delivery of affordable revenue budget annually and in the medium to long term.

The Reserves Strategy

The use of reserves over the Medium-Term is an important element of the financial strategy. Reserves are held to fund one-off non-recurring expenditure which will achieve specific objectives, or to support making efficiencies in the revenue budget. In 2024/25 reserves will be used to:

- support the replacement of LED lighting in DHQ Police Stations, which will result in a reduction in energy usage and cost, supporting the financial and environmental sustainability of the organisation.

- Delivering average speed cameras in Hereford and Shropshire to support road safety initiatives and deliver on the PCCs commitment to reduce accidents, deaths and serious injury.
- Support pilot projects to look at improving outcomes for victims and investing in prevention activity with the aim of reducing the risk of criminal activity in the future, reducing demand on scarce resources.

Reserves also provide a resource to fund expenditure which is considered to be outside of business as usual and to also manage risk. There are specific reserves to support legal claims made against West Mercia and to support the major investigation into maternity deaths at Shropshire and Telford NHS trust.

The following table shows the full expected deployment of reserves over the life of the plan.

	£m
Projected reserves at 1st April 2024	18.509
Increase in General Reserve to reflect increase in total budget	2.250
Utilisation of reserves to manage risk in relation to achieving a balanced budget	-1.764
Investment in infrastructure (Estates and ICT programmes)	-1.100
Contribute to the cost of the major investigation net of an expected successful application for Special Grant	-1.400
Management of the Insurance & Legal claims made against West Mercia	-0.150
To support victims of crime, prevent crime and ensure public safety	-2.564
Reserves remaining at the end of the MTFs period.	13.781

The table below shows the estimated reserve balances at the end of each year.

Total Reserves at	31/03/2024	31/03/2025	31/03/2026	31/03/2027	31/03/2028	31/03/2029
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m

General Reserves	7.750	8.000	8.500	9.000	9.500	10.000
Earmarked Reserves						
Budget Equalisation reserve	2.867	1.008	1.313	1.033	1.103	1.103
Investment in Infrastructure	1.414	1.914	0.414	0.314	0.314	0.314
Major Investigation Reserve	1.400	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Road Safety Reserve	1.503	1.103	1.153	1.103	1.203	1.303
Commissioning Reserve	1.672	0.608	0.208	-0.192	-0.592	-0.692
Insurance and Legal Claims	1.127	1.727	1.127	1.477	1.377	0.977
YJS*	0.776	0.776	0.776	0.776	0.776	0.776
Total Earmarked Reserves	10.759	7.136	4.991	4.511	4.181	3.781
Total Reserves	18.509	15.136	13.491	13.511	13.681	13.781

* This is a collaborative arrangement with local authorities

** The 2024/25 figures reflect assumed utilisation of reserves and are still subject to approval from the PCC

Each year the Treasurer carries out an assessment of the risks facing the PCC to determine the minimum level of reserves which the PCC needs to continue to hold. This year the assessment is that £7.5m needs to be held in general reserve at all times to provide adequately for these risks. Further details of the risk assessment are included below.

Statement on the Soundness of the Budget & Adequacy of Reserves

In setting the MTFs, the PCC needs to consider the revenue budget, implications of the investment in capital and the level of reserves held. The PCC holds a General Reserve, Earmarked Reserves and Capital Reserves. These will, in part, be governed by known or likely commitments, and, in part, by the appetite for risk. As the Treasurer, I have reviewed thoroughly the financial risks facing policing in West Mercia and assessed the level of reserves required.

In doing so, I have complied with CIPFA guidance on the establishment and maintenance of local authority reserves and balances.

Compliance with the CIPFA Guidance on key budget principles

Budget Principles	Response in relation to West Mercia budget planning
--------------------------	--

The 2023/24 financial year has continued to be dominated by a high level of inflation. The UK economy has continued to see inflation above the Bank of England target of 2%, although it has seen a steady decrease over the last 12 months in the CPI rate of inflation from the high of 11.2% in October 2022, down to 6.3% in October 2023 & 4.6% in November 2023.

The assumption for budget setting in 2023/24 was that inflation would cost an additional 7.5% through the year. In fact, prices were above this level for most of the financial year. This has meant that the price of many goods/services going into 2024/25 budget setting are higher than estimated in the previous year. The assumption for 2024/25 is that CPI inflation will fall back to 3%.

CPI is a more accurate measure of inflation relating to our business activity, The budget reflects the assumption as to what price increases are likely to be during the 2024/25 financial year.

A 7% pay award was agreed in 2023/24, recognising the cost-of-living implications of the high level of inflation. The government provided additional funding above the first 2.5%, recognising the significant impact that such a pay rise would have on policing resources. For 2024/25 the assumption is for a pay rises of 2.5%, reflecting government ambition to reduce the rate of inflation. This rate is above a recent Office of the Budget Responsibility six-year pension forecast of pay inflation, which for 2024/25 is 1.7%. The assumption is that the government would be likely to provide additional funding for a pay award above the assumed level of 2.5% as they did in 2023/24.

West Mercia Police makes full and appropriate provision, based on agreed estimates of the future impact of pay and price rises. The assumptions on what the rise will be take reference from the OBR predictions, the estimates made by other bodies in the Police Sector and reports from PACCTs. Whilst previous assumptions were based on information available at the time, it is clear that they can be overtaken by future events. Pay and non-pay inflation continues to be applied to appropriate areas of expenditure based on the best available information at the time the budget is set.

Over the last 12 months there has been a steady increase in the rates of interest, as the Bank of England have used this as a tool to bring inflation under control. It has moved from 0.75% at the start of the 2022/23 financial year up to 5.25% 18 months later. The Treasury Management team in West Mercia have forecasts of expected borrowing over the next 12 - 24 months and factored in the increased revenue consequences into the 2024/25 budget.

The treatment of inflation and interest rates

	<p>An informed assessment is made of interest rate movements using information provided from the OBR Predictions and from sector updates provided by our Treasury Management Advisors</p> <p>Individual expenditure lines in the budget are reviewed as to whether they are impacted by the general inflation or Interest rate changes. Known pressures, such as energy price increases and contractual obligations are included in the budget at their full cost.</p>
<p>Estimates of the level and timing of capital receipts</p>	<p>The Commissioner and West Mercia Police make a prudent assumption of future capital receipts. There is a rationalisation plan as part of the wider estates strategy which identifies potential disposals and estimated receipts. This informs expectation around the level and timing of receipts</p>
<p>The treatment of demand level pressures</p>	<p>The Force uses Priority based budgeting (PBB) process to inform the budget setting. The Force has continued to embed this into its business processes to provide a robust programme to feed into the 2024/25 budget setting. The process involves identifying Volume (Demand) and Method (Efficiency) changes within each business area that are expected to occur in the following financial year. These are expected changes which impact on the service levels that are currently being provided.</p> <p>The Deputy Chief Constable is the lead for this process, on behalf of the Chief Constable. Panels are held with each business area to review the proposed demand pressure and to challenge the assumptions behind the assessment. This ensures management oversight of the budget proposals</p> <p>Finally general balances are used as a last resort to manage and fund demand-led pressures. The General Fund balance is based on a risk assessment of factors which could potentially occur, rather than the known costs which are already account for in the revenue budget. The PCC has requested the Treasurer make an assessment of the appropriate level of general reserves to manage risk against having resources available to deliver services to the public.</p>
<p>The treatment of planned efficiency savings and productivity gains</p>	<p>The Force has made substantial cash savings over the last ten years generating over £80m. This cumulative level of budget reduction will inevitably mean that operational budgets will come under greater pressure and/or risk of overspending in future years. The Force has consistently achieved its annual efficiency target in previous years. In 2023/24 the budget had £5.714m removed from expenditure, where it was identified that services could continue to be delivered, but in better ways. In the budget proposals for 2024/25 the force have</p>

identified an additional £3.7m of cashable efficiencies it can realise through making best use of technology to provide services

The efficiencies identified on current services do not cover the wider budget pressures where resources are less than the total demand. A further exercise through the PBB process is required to identify service transformation and change to be able to produce a balanced budget.

The reported outturn for 2022/23 was an underspend of £7.6m of which £6.8 was contributed to reserves. The savings target of £6.0m was overachieved by £0.054m.

In 2023/24 at Q3 the projection is a £1.4m underspend. Savings of £10.8m have been realised against a target of £12.1m and is predicted to exceed the target by £0.7m. In total £0.7m of the original plan has not been achievable and has been offset by higher-than-expected savings in other areas.

The force has a positive track record of delivering achievable savings plans.

The financial risks inherent in any significant new and existing funding partnerships, collaboration, major outsourcing arrangements, or major capital developments

The financial consequences of partnership, collaboration working, outsourcing arrangements or capital investment are reported to the PCC as part of the medium term planning process. Where relevant any additional costs are incorporated in the annual revenue budget. These are reviewed regularly during the year in the Money Matters report and where necessary the MTFS is amended.

2023/24 represented the first full financial year where the Force did not have any significant collaboration agreement with Warwickshire Police, which had been a significant governance risk since it was determined that the partnership should be dissolved. In 2023/24 the Force has been able to focus on delivery of investments directly in West Mercia, particularly in digital infrastructure, to improve the service that the public receives.

There are risks around collaborative working with regional partners, particularly in relation to provision of student training and joint public order training. These are being monitored and plans being worked

through to ensure that any financial implications are understood and included in MTFS.

There is a risk that local authority partners will continue to withdraw funding because of pressures on their own budgets. There are also risks related to the continued viability of charities and other partners with increasing demand for services. The commissioning team are working with providers to manage this risk. However, during 2023/24 there has been a significant amount of work on Safer Communities project, which has seen the successful collaboration with all Local Authorities partners across West Mercia to undertake targeted work to deal with local issues. The PCC has contributed £2.5m to these projects to continue through to March 2025.

The PCC continues to push for more collaborative working through his role in the drugs strategy, through Integrated Care Boards and also with a focus on the Criminal Justice System

The Estates Service have produced their Estates Strategy which provides an outline as to how the estate will be managed and developed. The service has also reviewed the project management arrangements to ensure that they are fit for purpose to deliver both capital projects and estates rationalisation. The plan balances the need to deliver improvements to the estate and ensure that buildings are fit for purpose, whilst also trying to maximise capital receipts and reducing the risk from backlog maintenance.

During 2023/24 delivery of the new Joint Police and Fire Station in Redditch has continued with significant progress made on construction. By the end of 2023/24 it is expected that planning permission will be submitted for a new Firearms Range and training facility. The business case set out the capital case and also the revenue implications of the projects, recognising both the cost of borrowing and the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) requirements which are reflected in the MTFS

MRP and Borrowing costs are a key element of the MTFS. An important part of setting the capital programme for 2024/25 is identifying the revenue implications that the approval of the capital budget would create over the medium and long term. Given the lack of capital resources to fund this, the PCC has challenged the force to demonstrate that the plans are affordable to the revenue budget and that the projects being agreed have clear benefits (with a focus on cashable revenue savings). An updated Capital Strategy has been produced in December 2023 to underline a set of principles designed

	<p>to ensure that the capital programme is affordable and sustainable. It reflects the recent increase in interest rates and the impact this has had on the borrowing requirement for West Mercia.</p>
<p>The availability of reserves, government grants and other funds to deal with major contingencies and the adequacy of provisions.</p>	<p>The 2024/25 budget has been set to meet both the recurring revenue spend commitments and priorities, whilst recognising there are risks that need to be managed. This has taken account the level of government grants and other sources of income. The Force is being proactive in recognising that they need to be prudent in managing unplanned risks, through the insurance reserve, and also how they manage the funding of capital programme.</p> <p>There has been an assessment of the adequacy of general reserves to meet unplanned budget impacts. This has identified the potential risks to the budget and provides a sensitivity analysis of what the financial impact might be. The overall assessment is that the minimum level of general fund balances should be maintained at circa £7.5m. The PCC has not been required to make a call on the general reserves in the last 3 budget cycles.</p> <p>The PCC has created several earmarked revenue reserves and provisions to meet specific expenditure items. The details of each of the reserves held are included in this report. Appropriations are made to and from these reserves on an annual basis as required.</p> <p>The Force is undertaking an investigation into allegations of corporate manslaughter at Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals NHS Trust. The costs will be considerable, and the PCC has been allocated a Special Grant from the Home Office. The criteria for special grants are that they will fund a proportion of the cost of the investigation based on a taper. This taper is expected to be 60% of costs incurred in 2024/25. An earmarked reserve has been built up over the last budget rounds to meet the additional cost that will fall onto the PCC. The reserve is not currently sufficient to meet ongoing cost of an investigation if it continues over the MTFs. There is an expectation that the Force will manage the scope and length of the investigation and to incorporate costs into the annual revenue budget.</p>

	<p>The Insurance and Legal Claims reserve is there to manage the decision taken to increase excess exposure, in return for reduced premiums. The decision is that we will use self-insurance through an earmarked reserve to meet the cost of claims made. This also relies on proactive risk management to avoid incidents happening that lead to a claim being made.</p>
<p>The general financial climate to which the authority is subject.</p>	<p>The budget report contains a review of the economic climate and of the Autumn Statement made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It has considered these implications for West Mercia and the assumptions used in constructing the budget. Based on the available data there is reassurance that these assumptions are reasonable.</p> <p>In November 2021, the Chancellor announced the outcome of the Spending Review 2021 (SR21) which was a 3-year government departmental spending budget. The Provisional Settlement from the Home Office has been released which confirm proposed central government funding which has been fully reflected in the budget report.</p> <p>The MTFs reflects our local best estimate of future inflation rates, increases in government grants and contributions and revenues raised from Council Tax.</p>

General reserve

A review is undertaken annually of the significant risks and pressures facing the PCC before setting a minimum level of reserves held in the General Reserve. A reduction is then made to reflect the fact that not all risks will occur during the life of the Medium-Term Financial Scenario.

The key risks the PCC faces (and for which no specific provision in earmarked reserves is made) are:

Provision	£m	Reason
<p>Efficiency savings are not delivered.</p>	<p>0.800</p>	<p>£3.2m of efficiencies and corporate savings have been proposed through the PBP process to be delivered by the force. This will be monitored during the year and expectation is that action will be taken if there are efficiencies that are not met in year. However, there is a risk that some fail to be delivered and alternatives cannot be found. Assumption is that there will not be a budget underspend in other areas to offset this.</p>

		Assume that 25% may not be delivered (which would equate to £0.800m)
Achieving a balanced budget through savings	2.244	<p>The Current projection is that the Force needs to identify £6.8m of savings in order to achieve a balanced budget for the 2024/25 financial year.</p> <p>The reported outturn for 2021/22 was an underspend of £7.7m. The savings achieved during the year was £3.237m against a budget of £4.056m.</p> <p>The reported outturn for 2022/23 was an underspend of £7.6m of which £6.8 was contributed to reserves. The savings target of £6.0m was overachieved by £0.054m.</p> <p>In 2023/24 at Q3 the projection is a £1.4m underspend. Savings of £10.8m have been realised against a target of £12.1m and is predicted to exceed the target by £0.7m. In total £0.7m of the original plan has not been achievable and has been offset by higher-than-expected savings in other areas.</p> <p>The requirement to continue to deliver savings and efficiencies increases the risk of not being able to formulate achievable plans to deliver those savings. However there has been a lot of work from the force to identify realistic savings from taking specific action before the start of the financial year which provides assurance that they can be delivered.</p> <p>Given the work undertaken and the previous record of the force in delivering savings there is a reasonably low risk that they will not be delivered.</p> <p>However, a risk still remains. A risk factor of 33% has been allocated against this savings plan which is equivalent to £2.244m</p>
Major Investigation Funding	2.841	<p>In 20/21 the Force became responsible for a major investigation into the care of mothers and babies who died or suffered serious harm in a maternity care setting at the Shrewsbury and Telford NHS Trust.</p> <p>The Force has been able to claim a Special Grant from the Home Office and are in received of a tapered grant to cover the cost of the majority of the investigation. There is a requirement on West Mercia to identify £1.4m of resource in</p>

		<p>2024/25 to support the investigation which is held within the reserve.</p> <p>However, there is the potential that another significant investigation could be required although this is considered to be unlikely. It is expected that a Force would cover up to 1% of the revenue budget requirement of £284.1m, before it is eligible to support from special grant from the Home office. This would be a financial impact of £2.9m</p>
Budget Assumptions - Risk of Collection Fund deficit from changes to tax base / LCTS	0.250	The current economic climate is for low growth which has the potential to impact on employment. This is a risk to the Collection Fund, reducing the estimated surplus distributed into the funding. Current assumption is that the surplus would be £1.00m. Have assessed risk of the impact on the declared surplus a provision of 25% of the estimated contribution has been made.
Budget Assumptions - Risk of Pay inflation being 1% higher than budget	1.000	Provision for pay award and contractual inflation made in MTFP. A provision of 1% of the pay budgets should be included to reflect the economic uncertainty that is currently being experienced in the UK. Pay budget is approx £200m - 1% = 2.0m for half a year £1.0m
Budget Assumptions - Risk of Non Pay inflation being 1% higher than budget	0.750	Provision for pay award and contractual inflation made in MTFP. A provision of 1% of the non-pay budgets of circa £75.0m should be included to reflect the economic uncertainty that is currently being experienced in the UK.
Change in interest rates	0.350	The expectation is that interest rates will not be increased by the Bank of England from the current rate of 5.25% as a result of improving inflation rates announced in November 23. However, this is based on the current global economic conditions, any new economic shocks/crisis could change this. The risk of a 1% increase in interest rates on planned external borrowing of £35m in 2024/25 would have an impact of £0.350m. This reflects the economic uncertainty
Additional costs to establish arrangements to reform policing in West Mercia	0.500	Refers to revenue impact of capital expenditure which can be cash limited. Substantial provision for both revenue and capital expenditure already made in the Medium-Term Capital Programme and Medium Term Financial Plan.

		In the 2024/25 it is assumed that in-house project and programme management costs of £1.325m can be capitalised. There is a risk that this resource may be used to support revenue projects. A provision will be made here to mitigate this risk.
Replacement of Airwaves Network/ESN/ESCMP	2.000	Lack of detail and clarity on implementation from Home Office. Substantial provision made in the Medium-Term financial Plan and Capital Programme but that may not be affordable given other budget pressures
Impact of review of Police Funding Formula	1.000	Outcome unknown and timing of review delayed by Home Office.
General Contingency provision for extraordinary events	2.841	Based on 1% of net revenue expenditure of £284.1m
	14.576	
Reduction to reflect the fact all of these risks will not occur in the short term	7.288	50% reduction to reflect that not all events will occur in this time period.
	7.288	

The aggregate cost of those elements which it is feasible to estimate is £7.288m. It should be noted that the impact of any major investigations, changes as a result of a funding review or increased economic and political uncertainty cannot be accurately estimated and could prove to be significant. The PCC does not necessarily have to provide money in reserves for each of these elements individually unless they are certain to occur, as one contingency can provide for several possible events. It is however, unlikely that all events will occur within the same financial year, and an adjustment has been applied to reflect this. However, the PCC does need to consider the likelihood of them occurring during the period covered by the plan.

The recommendation is that the minimum level of reserves be set at £7.500m. It is recognised that this is below the 3% of the net revenue budget threshold, which is generally considered to be good practice, but is sufficient based on the assessment of risk undertaken. The MTFs includes a requirement to increase the General Fund Reserve through the Medium Term, providing an additional contribution to offset the risks identified as the net revenue budget increases.

Provided that this sum is available at all times within reserves, I am satisfied that this budget is soundly based and adequately provides for the risks facing the PCC.

Earmarked reserves

The predicted balance on 31st March 2024 for each earmarked revenue reserve, which has a specific purpose and particular timescale, is shown in the table below.

Earmarked Reserve	Forecast Balance at 31/03/24 £m	Purpose of Reserve
Budget Equalisation reserve	2.867	To provide initial investment in transformational change programmes and to manage risk relating to the implementation of any efficiency plans in the budget proposals
Investment in Infrastructure Reserve	1.414	To provide resources to invest in the infrastructure (ICT and Estates), with the aim of reducing revenue costs going forward
Major Investigation Reserves	1.400	Funds held to meet costs of the current major investigation above the taper funding provided through the special grant. The 2024/25 taper funding is expected to be 60% of the costs incurred. The remaining 40% will be offset by the call on this reserve.
Road Safety Reserve	1.503	Funds held to fund road safety initiatives
Commissioning Reserve	1.672	To support spend on non-recurring PCC commissioning initiatives to support victims of crime and prevent those at risk of being criminalised
Insurance and Legal Claims Reserve	1.127	Provides a self-insurance fund where it is cost effective to do so.
YJS Reserve	0.776	Funds held on behalf of the responsible authorities to fund the costs of Youth Justice Service.
Total Earmarked Reserves	10.759	

The tables in section 4 show the deployment of all reserves over the life of the Medium-Term Financial Scenario, and the remaining reserve balances at the end of each financial year.

Capital reserves and balances

In addition to revenue reserves, capital reserves can also be maintained. These are used to finance the capital programme.

There is a reserve holding Capital Grants Unapplied. This holds the capital grants from the Home Office that have not yet been spent. These grants are applied to fund the capital programme and can be carried forward without penalty until required. It is expected that all capital grants awarded will have been spent during 2023/24 and the balance on the reserve as of 1st April 2024 is expected to be £0.0m.

There is a Capital Receipts Reserve. This holds receipts from the sale of land and buildings which are no longer needed for operational policing as more efficient use is made of partners' and the policing estate. The funding table for the capital budget, included above outlines the receipts expected from asset sales from 2024/25. Currently any receipts in year have been used to invest in the capital programme and avoid borrowing. The balance on the reserve as of 1st April 2024 it is expected to be £0.0m.

The PCC has instructed the Estates Service to identify how we can maximise capital receipts from the estates and also make effective decisions to reduce the revenue costs. This will ensure that we are using the assets we have as efficiently as possible. The raising of capital receipts is an important part of offsetting the borrowing required to deliver improvements and ensuring the capital programme remains affordable.

Summary

There has been a comprehensive review of all reserves held by the PCC and the spending plans that are set out in the budget. This report sets out clearly and transparently the reserves held, the purpose for which they are held, the plans for their use and the risks and assumptions underpinning them.

The 2024/25 budget has an element of risk and uncertainty in the ability of the PCC to set and deliver a balanced budget. The impact of inflation comes at a time when the organisation continues its investment in its digital infrastructure. This investment is required to ensure that it can operate effectively and to use the technology that is available to drive service efficiency, but it is a costly undertaking. This necessary investment comes at a time when the establishment number of police officers is at the highest level on record. These two competing costs fall on a limited amount of resource available making it challenging to set a balanced budget.

I remain satisfied that a balanced revenue budget can be set, but that it is likely to be reliant on a concerted commitment from the force to deliver planned cost reductions agreed with the PCC. I consider that the force has a positive record on delivering these plans over the past few years.

As already mentioned, the requirement to invest in our digital infrastructure, our estate and other assets means that there is an increasing cost both in terms of MRP and borrowing costs. This has been recognised and included in the MTFS. This is one of the driving factors of the deficit in 2024/25 financial year. A review of the Capital Strategy has been undertaken to ensure that we can live within the resources available over the medium term.

West Mercia deliberately holds a low level of reserves to ensure that available resources are focused on the delivery of services for the public each year. However, this means that responding to further pressures on revenue costs would come with considerable risk on the Force's ability to deliver efficient and effective public focused services within the set revenue budget.

Appendix A - Summary of West Mercia Grant Settlement

The estimated Police Funding Settlement from the Home Office is:

2023/24	Funding Stream	2024/25	Change
£ m		£ m	%
81.576	Police Grant (including Community Support Grant)	86.492	0.6
52.296	Revenue Support Grant	55.432	0.6
4.300	PUP uplift Grant	0.000	
11.975	Legacy Council Tax Grants (freeze grants and plus council tax support grant)	11.975	0
150.147	Total	153.900	

The 2023/24 budget identified the PUP grant as a separate element of Funding.

It has been agreed that this classification was not representative of the grant conditions. It should have been included as an un-ringfenced revenue grant.

In 2024/25 this has been changed and therefore it means that the comparison of the change in funding is not representative year on year.

Appendix Bi - Subjective analysis of income & expenditure

Appendix B(i)					
	2023/24 Budget	Inflation	Demand & Efficiency	2024/25 Budget	Variance
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Government Grant (Core Funding)	150.147	0.803	2.950	153.900	3.753
Council Tax Precept	122.891	5.996	1.371	130.258	7.367
Total Funding / Net Budget Requirement	273.038	6.799	4.321	284.158	11.120
Police Officer Pay	138.623	8.622	5.050	152.295	13.672
Police Officer overtime	2.773	0.113	-0.193	2.693	-0.080
Police Staff Pay	71.605	5.469	3.553	80.627	9.022
PCSO Pay	7.617	0.899	0.263	8.779	1.162
Police Staff overtime	0.531	0.020	-0.048	0.503	-0.028
Temporary and Agency Staff	0.113	0.000	-0.029	0.084	-0.029
Injury & Ill Health Pensions	3.599	0.111	0.232	3.942	0.343
Other Employee Expenses	2.511	0.044	-0.280	2.275	-0.236
Premises	11.485	-0.060	0.395	11.820	0.335
Transport	4.831	0.052	-0.369	4.514	-0.317
Supplies & Services	33.920	0.881	-2.271	32.530	-1.390
Third Party Payments	20.387	0.435	1.203	22.025	1.638
Intergroup Services	0.000	0.026	2.179	2.205	2.205
Capital Financing	7.794	0.000	3.748	11.542	3.748
Gross Expenditure	305.789	16.612	13.433	335.834	30.045
Income	-28.721	-0.694	*-17.985	-47.400	-18.679
Net Force Budget / Expenditure / Variance	277.068	15.918	13.433	288.434	11.366
Funding from Reserves	4.030	0.000	0.246	4.276	0.246
Net Budget after Reserves	273.038	15.918	13.187	284.158	11.120

Appendix Bii - Objective analysis of income & expenditure

Appendix B(ii)				
	2023/24	2024/25	Variance	Variance
	£m	£m	£m	%
Business Services Directorate				
Business Services Directorate				
Business Operations	8.826	9.183	0.357	4.0%
People and OD	9.979	10.614	0.635	6.4%
Strategy Planning & Insight	4.077	4.288	0.211	5.2%
Total	22.882	24.085	1.203	5.3%
Commercial Services				
Digital Services	21.964	24.667	2.703	12.3%
Legal	3.380	2.965	- 0.415	-12.3%
Change	1.094	0.876	- 0.218	-19.9%
Finance	0.854	0.910	0.056	6.6%
Procurement & Contracts	0.383	0.434	0.051	13.3%
	27.675	29.852	2.177	7.9%
Corporate Support Directorate				
PSD & Vetting	1.869	2.354	0.485	25.9%
Corporate Support	1.744	1.574	- 0.170	-9.7%
Audit Risk & Compliance	1.107	1.240	0.133	12.0%
Total	4.720	5.168	0.448	9.5%
Local Policing				
Local Policing Directorate Level	0.643	0.856	0.213	33.1%
South Worcestershire	21.032	22.038	1.006	4.8%
North Worcestershire	22.291	23.489	1.198	5.4%
Herefordshire	14.040	14.205	0.165	1.2%
Shropshire	19.035	19.735	0.700	3.7%
Telford	18.224	19.146	0.922	5.1%
Problem Solving	5.317	6.556	1.239	23.3%
	100.582	106.025	5.443	5.4%
Operations Support				
Ops Support Directorate Level	1.867	1.851	- 0.016	-0.9%
Force Operations	20.601	21.913	1.312	6.4%
Public Contact	18.456	23.048	4.592	24.9%
Total	40.924	46.812	5.888	14.4%

Crime & Vulnerability

C&V Directorate Level	2.217	2.711	0.494	22.3%
Crime Management	0.684	0.626	- 0.058	-8.5%
Criminal Justice	3.355	3.812	0.457	13.6%
Custody	6.840	8.198	1.358	19.9%
Forensics	9.159	9.697	0.538	5.9%
Intelligence & AO	5.180	5.388	0.208	4.0%
Investigations	9.257	10.492	1.235	13.3%
ROCU	4.944	5.101	0.157	3.2%
Special Branch	- 0.014	-	0.014	-100.0%
Vulnerability & Safeguarding	4.413	5.113	0.700	15.9%
Total	46.035	51.138	5.103	11.1%

Corporate Budgets

Corporate budgets	11.083	12.280	1.197	10.8%
Pay award & Police officer uplift grant	0.000	- 14.437	- 14.437	0.0%
Total	11.083	- 2.157	- 13.240	-119.5%

Police and Crime Commissioner

Estates	12.459	13.389	0.930	7.5%
Police & Crime Commissioner	10.708	12.032	1.324	12.4%
YOS	-	0.044	0.044	0.0%
Total	23.167	25.465	2.298	9.9%

TOTAL	277.068	288.434	11.366	4.1%
--------------	----------------	----------------	---------------	-------------

Funding from Reserves	4.030	4.276	0.246	6.1%
------------------------------	--------------	--------------	--------------	-------------

After reserve funding	273.038	284.158	11.120	4.1%
------------------------------	----------------	----------------	---------------	-------------

Appendix C – Capital Programme

2024/25 Capital Programme			
Area	Project	Subject to Business Case	23/24 Project Value
Digital Services Transformation	DST - End User Experience	Already Approved	£4,633,000
	DST - Tech Modernisation		
	DST - Future Operating Model		
	DST - Application Transformation		
	DST Total		£4,633,000
Change Programmes	Telephony	YES	£348,000
	Sharepoint	YES	£299,000
	Data Driven Policing	YES	£500,000
	OCC SAAB	YES	£3,120,000
	Digital Forensics Transformation	Already Approved	£504,000
	eQMS	YES	£40,000
	Athena	YES	£124,000
	ANPR	YES	£180,000
	Other Change Total		£5,115,000
Estates Programme	Redditch Police Station	Already Approved	£11,657,000
	Firearms Training School / Firearms Range	Partially Approved	£2,747,000
	Telford SARC	YES	£1,000,000
	Northern Estate Investment	YES	£2,500,000
	Hereford Refurb	YES	£200,000
	Public Order Training Facility (Cosford)	YES	£1,000,000
	LED Rollout Project	Partially Approved	£800,000
	Planned Programme - Condition works	Delegated Authority	£800,000

	Planned Programme - other works	Delegated Authority	£700,000
	DHQ M&E/HVAC Condition Survey	YES	£1,000,000
	Custody Suite M&E Condition	YES	£1,000,000
	CCTV Across all Estates, including Custody	YES	£500,000
	Hindlip Utilisation	YES	£250,000
	Hindlip FWOV	YES	£250,000
	OPCC location	YES	£100,000
	Estates Total		£24,504,000
Fleet Replacement Programme	Vehicles - Fleet Replacement Programme	Consented	£3,363,000
	EV infrastructure	YES	£1,500,000
	Fleet Additionality	YES	£900,000
	FRP Total		£5,763,000
ICT Replacement Projects	Airwave Replacement Equipment / Radio's	YES	£750,000
	ICT Replacement Total		£750,000
Other Capital Projects	Timeplan	YES	£36,000
	Airwave Mast Monitoring	YES	£20,000
	Other Capital Total		£56,000
2024/25 Capital Programme Total			£40,821,000

Appendix D – Performance Metrics

Safer West Mercia Plan	Improvement Areas	Key Performance Indicators
Putting victims and survivors first	Victim satisfaction	% of victims satisfied with service
Building a more secure West Mercia	Total recorded crime	Volume of total recorded crime
		TRC - % outcome 1 & 1A
	Violent crime	Volume of violence with injury
		Violence with injury - % outcome 1 & 1A
	Rape	Volume of rape offences
		Rape - % outcome 1 & 1A
	Robbery	Volume of Robbery offences
		Robbery - % outcome 1 & 1A
	Residential burglary	Residential Burglary
		Residential Burglary - % outcome 1 & 1A
Vehicle crime	Volume of vehicle crime	
	Vehicle crime - % outcome 1 & 1A	
Domestic abuse	Volume of domestic abuse	
	Domestic abuse - % outcome 1 & 1A	
Reassuring West Mercia's Communities	Call handling	% of 999 calls answered within 10 seconds
		% of 101 calls answered within 30 seconds
	Public confidence	Overall Confidence - % of respondents that agree or strongly agree they have confidence in local policing
		Visibility - % of respondents that report seeing a police officer or Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) at least weekly
Reforming West Mercia	Emergency response times	Median Grade 1 response time
		Median Grade 2 response time
	Finance	Financial Outturn is within the agreed budget
		Savings plan is delivered (as part of achieving financial outturn)
		Unqualified annual VFM conclusion is received from the External Auditors
Environment	Reducing the carbon footprint associated with policing	

Budget Consultation 2024/25 - Summary

1. **Background**

- 1.1. The budget consultation ran in a two-stage process.
- 1.2. To understand the priorities of residents and help inform the PCC prior to firming up his draft budget proposals for 2024/25, public consultation was undertaken through community engagement events. The events took place during six months throughout the summer period.
- 1.3. The PCC followed this up by carrying out a survey, specifically on the draft precept and budget proposals. This consultation launched on the 7th December 2023 and ended at 12am on the 7th January 2024. A precept proposal, the Proposed Budget 2024/25 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25–2028/29 was published as part of the consultation process, along with a short online survey to enable people to comment on the proposals being put forward.
- 1.4. In total, views from over 1900 residents were received. Approximately 1000 people were spoken to as part of the community engagement event and 915 were in response to the survey.

2. **Publicity and media coverage**

- 2.1. A range of communication tools were used to promote both the events and the survey consultation to communities across West Mercia. These included:
- 2.2. *Social media:* Press releases and consultation links were shared via the West Mercia PCC Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn pages for events and the survey on launch and throughout. Accompanying graphics were used to replace existing banners on both social media accounts.
- 2.3. All social media platforms are monitored and where appropriate comments on the precept have been responded to, however the 'instant' nature of this media means it is not practical to include them in this report.
- 2.4. *Press release/media:* A number of press releases were issued for the survey. Regularly issued PCC Newsletters highlighted that the survey was open, and encouraged people to take part during the period each was open. This was covered by a number of different media outlets.
- 2.5. The Neighbourhood Matters platform also saw the events and consultation promoted directly to thousands of residents.
- 2.6. Community engagement across all of West Mercia was undertaken to encourage more people to complete the survey with visits to each of the local policing areas.

3. Findings

- 3.1. Set out below are the findings from both stages of engagement activity to inform the budget and precept setting.

4. Community Engagement Events

- 4.1. Ahead of developing the budget for 2024/25, the PCC attended a number of community events across West Mercia including freshers' fairs attended by students to engage with communities and understand public priorities/concerns. These events were attended by the PCC, Deputy PCC or Assistant PCC and supported by staff from the PCC's Office.
- 4.2. Residents were asked to identify their top three priorities from a list.

Demographics

- 4.3. In total, over 1000 people took part.
- 4.4. The summer events attended took place across Worcestershire, Shropshire and Herefordshire.

Engagement findings

- 4.5. People visiting the PCC's stall at events were asked to identify their top three policing priorities.
- Road Safety, Violence against women and girls (VAWG) and accessibility and visibility of police officer were ranked as the top three priorities.
- 4.6. The PCC took these findings into account and used them in the development of the draft budget. This budget delivers a further 10 officers, taking West Mercia's establishment to 2,506, the highest establishment number on record in the force. Safer Neighbourhood teams will be protected through fewer abstractions to be focused on neighbourhood policing and addressing key community concerns.
- 4.7. This extends to making sure funding is also focussed on commissioning victim services and crime prevention. This budget includes provision to ensure victim services in West Mercia can cope with demand and provide the right support at the right times, to enable people to cope and recover. Working with partners funding will also be targeted at initiatives that deliver effective prevention and community problem solving. The themes identified in this survey are reflected in a number of ambitions and measures that the Commissioner will use to ensure resources are used effectively by the force.

2. Budget Consultation Survey

- 4.8. To support the above findings, a short online survey was launched to enable people to comment on the draft budget proposals put forward by the Commissioner, informed by the first round of consultation. The online survey asked up to 3 questions specifically around the precept and included one open question enabling respondents to comment on their reasons for either supporting or opposing the proposals.

Demographics

- 4.9. A total of 915 responses were received. A breakdown of respondents by council tax area is shown below.

31% (283) South Worcestershire
25% (228) Shropshire
23% (212) North Worcestershire
11% (96) Herefordshire
10% (95) Telford and Wrekin

- 4.10. A number of additional demographic questions were asked as part of this survey to further understand those who are engaging with PCC media.

- Around 50% of respondents were male, 40% were female, 9% preferred not to say and 1% said other.
- Almost 36% of respondents were aged 61 to 80, 26%, aged 46 to 60, 20% between 31 and 45, 7% between 18 and 30, 8% preferred not to say and the remaining 3% were aged 80+.
- The majority (88%) of respondents were White/English/British/Other, 10% preferred not to say with the remaining 2% split between Mixed Ethnic Background, Asian/Asian British, Black/African/Caribbean/Black British and Other Ethnic Group.

Consultation findings

- 4.11. The second survey asked whether respondents would be willing to pay, on average, £5.26* (1.99%) more for policing per year based on a band D property. The majority of respondents, 75%, supported this proposed increase, whilst the remaining 25% did not.
- 4.12. Those that showed support to the first question were asked if they were willing to pay £13 (4.91%) more for policing per year based on a band D property. Again, around 75% responded yes whilst the remaining 25% said no.

- 4.13. Those that agreed to the maximum increase of 4.91% account for 56% of total respondents.
- 4.14. When asked if they had any further comments, 464 respondents chose to respond. A summary of all the comments are shown below, grouped by common theme or concern. It should be noted that a number of the comments referred to more than one theme and that there is a degree of subjectivity in the interpretation of each comment.

Main themes

- 4.15. The main themes arising from the comments were:
- 4.16. Financial concerns/increase in cost of living – a number of people made a finance related comment, many were concerned about other household price increases, the perception that additional funding should come from government and how effectively the budget was spent. The size and cost of the PCC team was also raised by some.
- 4.17. Officer numbers/Police visibility – The comments were generally from those who remain concerned about a perceived lack of police presence. There was some reference to the need for police staff in roles to support operational policing.
- 4.18. Police response/action- Comments were generally from those who remained concerned about a perceived lack of police action to incidents. Some reference to specific issues, namely rural crime, road safety, drugs and ASB.
- 4.19. General support – a number of those supporting the proposals just left a positive comment which did not align with any of the main themes.
- 4.20. Miscellaneous comments – a number of respondents both for and against the proposals left a comment which does not directly fit into the above themes.

5. Commissioner's response to the comments received

- 5.1. Within the surveys a number of people chose to comment on the proposals. The comments have been grouped into themes, based on the predominant message in each comment. A response to each of the main themes is shown below.
- 5.2. Financial concerns/ increase in cost of living – My mission for the communities of West Mercia remains unchanged, despite the financial challenges the nation continues to face.
- 5.3. I am committed to ensuring that crime falls, offenders are brought swiftly to justice and victims get the support they need. I will ensure that every penny of your money is spent wisely.

- 5.4. As set out in my budget proposals, I will use all the powers available to me to support and challenge the Chief Constable to ensure you feel and see the full benefits of my investment.
- 5.5. Understanding the experience, you receive from the force impacts your confidence in the police, I am putting more investment into police contact so 999 and 101 calls are answered more quickly. I also want to see officers being evermore visible and accessible, with numbers reaching a record-breaking 2,506 and improvements to investigation quality to ensure victims of crime get the justice they deserve.
- 5.6. Officer numbers/Police visibility – I have, as I promised, taken the views of the public to shape this budget proposal.
- 5.7. I am committed to building a Safer West Mercia and I am committed to delivering on the public's priorities to increase police visibility and accessibility in their communities. Therefore, through my budget, I am increasing officer numbers by a further 10. This will take West Mercia's establishment to a total of 2,506 officers. I have delivered record levels of officers and it's now about maintaining those numbers and ensuring they're tackling your priorities.
- 5.8. Examples of the incredible work being done in the community to tackle crime with an increase in officer numbers has been seen through the Neighbourhood Crime Fighting Teams. These bespoke units were created through the uplift I provided in my previous budget and they have been working hard to tackle matters such as ASB and retail crime at the heart of the community.
- 5.9. Through this uplift, I can also protect SNT numbers, which will reduce the levels of abstractions so local officers can stay in the heart of the community.
- 5.10. I want the public to benefit from my investment and I will ensure these officers are providing the security that residents need in order to build a safer West Mercia.
- 5.11. Although I am reassured by the work West Mercia Police is already doing to improve their service, I acknowledge that more can always be done to improve. I want to ensure that through my budget, public confidence and trust in the police force continues to increase.
- 5.12. Police response/action - As your voice in policing, I am confident that through my budget I will continue on my journey to build a safer West Mercia.
- 5.13. Understanding the service you receive impacts your confidence in the police and I am therefore investing in the 101 and 999 service to ensure your calls are answered as quickly as possible.
- 5.14. The face-to-face contact you have with your local policing team is also vitally important. Although progress on this has been made, with my investment in the Neighbourhood Crime Fighting Teams who have been working at the heart of

communities to tackle and prevent crime, I believe more can be done to make officers more visible and accessible to you.

- 5.15. Victims of crime should always be given the support they need and deserve when they contact the police to ensure they have access to the resources they need to recover from the trauma inflicted upon them. I will continue to invest and commission these services to ensure they are available for everyone who needs to access them.
- 5.16. Through this work and more that will be done, I will continue to support the force prioritising the greatest possible proportion of resource towards frontline policing and ultimately, delivering the best for communities.



WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL 7 FEBRUARY 2024

POLICE & CRIME PLAN ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

Recommendation

1. Members of the Panel are invited to consider the report.

Background

2. The purpose of this report is to provide members of the Police and Crime Panel with an overview of activity undertaken by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in support of his Safer West Mercia Plan and provide an update on police performance.
3. A specific update on the West Mercia Police Local Policing Charter and Naloxone review has been included as requested at the last panel meeting.

Delivery plan and assurance

4. A delivery plan is used to support monitoring and assurance of progress against individual elements within the plan and is scrutinised at the PCC's monthly governance meetings.
5. Examples of recent activity in support of the Safer West Mercia Plan's four key objectives, are set out in the following sections.

Putting victims and survivors first

Sexual Violence

6. The Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Service contract is in its final year. The PCC commissioning team has started talking to the current provider about extending the service for an additional 12 months. This will allow time for a Sexual Violence Needs Assessment to be conducted. The results will inform future funding arrangements.
7. The Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (ISVA) waiting list has reduced significantly showing an average 20-day wait period for adult ISVA referrals. The Child ISVA waiting list also has an average wait time of 20 days, and the Family ISVA waiting list has an average wait time of 23 days. Referrals are slightly down from Q1, but this is consistent with previous years.

8. The Branch Children and Young Persons waiting list and average number of days waiting for service has reduced during Q2 due to onboarding a part-time Branch worker for Shropshire.
9. The Forensic Science Regulation (FSR) Code is now Mandatory. This means that all Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) require UKAS accreditation for their Forensic Science activities (FSA) by 2 October 2025. After this date SARCs who are not accredited must declare compliance or non-compliance in reports and statements for the criminal justice system and may be subject to FSR compliance notices or enforcement action. West Mercia SARCs continue to work towards meeting the ISO Forensic Accreditation.
10. The Sexual Violence Complex Care Pathfinder (for adult survivors of sexual assault and abuse with complex care mental health needs) aims is to deliver a single, integrated service that meets the needs of eligible victims by putting the victim/survivors needs at the heart of their treatment and recovery plan.
11. There are two hubs in West Mercia made up of Service Managers, Counsellors, Trainers, Group Facilitators, Stabilisation & Support Workers (or similar). Clinical Psychologists are also in the process of being onboarded. The hub has been receiving referrals from 3 January.

Victim Services

12. A Victims' Services Options Paper was submitted for discussion at the PCC Office Governance Board scheduled for January 2024. This will determine next steps and future recommissioning options for the longer-term provision (March 2025 onwards) of multi-crime victim service provision. The paper utilises information from the OPCC commissioned 2023 Victim and Offender Needs Assessment.
13. Victim Support have submitted a proposal for a single point extension for the financial year 2024/25 which is currently undergoing budgetary approval and sign off process. Market engagement is scheduled for January/February 2024 to promote transparency/ market fairness.

Prevention

14. West Mercia Steer Clear Children and Young People (CYP) Diversionary service, funded by the PCC (£538,496), has fully mobilised and carried out an initial workshop in Herefordshire in November during Operation Sceptre, to promote the service and raise awareness of knife crime. Anyone can refer a 10–18 year old believed to be at risk of involvement in knife related crime to the service provided by The Children's Society (TCS). The service is to be evaluated next year by an academic partner. Meetings in January were held with the College of Policing to discuss this further.

Building a more secure West Mercia

Safer Streets Five

15. As part of the fifth round of the Government's Safer Streets initiative (SS5), the PCC bid successfully for a further £999,025 to fund a range of projects designed to tackle Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG), ASB and Neighbourhood Crime within 2023/24 and 2024/25. Rapid procurement processes have been undertaken with successful conclusion, and awards have been made to providers to deliver upon the initiatives. Offers were made to a collaborative bid between WMRSASC and AXIS and also to Intensive Engagement; a service provider tackling ASB.
16. Since announcing the SS5 funding, as a result budgetary pressures across Government and the need for reallocation of resources and reprioritisation, Ministers have made the decision to reduce the funding allocation. The budget for West Mercia's Safer Streets for the 2024/25 financial year will be reduced by **£180,000** from the original award amount. The PCC remains confident that successful partnership working with the force will enable delivery of the SSF5 initiatives with minimal impact.
17. Several of the SS5 projects are already producing some very encouraging outcomes, including the Behavioural Detection Officers (BDO). The first tranche of BDOs had a very successful weekend using their behavioural detection skills in Worcester, Hereford, Telford & Shrewsbury resulting in some excellent examples of preventative policing.

Improving Responses to Domestic Abuse

18. The Men and Masculinities Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme (DAPP) has received 58 referrals across West Mercia in Q3, to date.
19. Cranstoun attended the West Mercia Police internal briefing to share information on the DAPP. Staff also met with the West Mercia Police Equality and Diversity officer, DARO and VAWG officers to promote the programme.
20. Conversations are ongoing between the OPCC and the force to ensure appropriate referrals are being made into services. Referrals into DA services was the subject of discussion at the PCC's Assurance & Accountability meeting on VAWG in December 2024, with both organisations committed to ensuring all commissioned services are well utilised.
21. The West Mercia wide DRIVE high risk DA perpetrator programme has accepted 58 allocations so far in Q3, working with 59 victim/survivors and 130 children and young people.

Female Offenders – reducing reoffending, Out of Court Disposals (OOCDD)

22. Willowdene have reported an increase in referrals for Q3, with 40 received prior to the end of the reporting period, this is a much-improved position from Q2.
23. Willowdene staff are continuing to deliver awareness raising sessions for out of court disposals (OOCDD) and attending training days with the force. Referrals from the force have increased and are now including women experiencing Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

24. The PCC has allocated £30,000 to fund an evaluation of Willowdene Rehabilitation Ltd. The evaluation will enable the PCC to understand the impact and effectiveness of the service, developing an evidence base to inform future recommissioning and strengthening any future external funding opportunities the PCC may bid towards.

Road safety

25. A draft of the OPCC Road Safety Needs Assessment is under review. Feedback will be provided to the Strategy, Planning & Insight (SPI) team who are producing the assessment in mid-January. The PCC's office will be requesting an executive summary that can be shared with relevant partners / contributors.
26. The Road Safety Grant round has relaunched for a second round on 11 December following an unsuccessful first round. The second grant round has been split into two lots factoring in some early findings in the draft Road Safety Needs Assessment. The two lots encourage local and West Mercia wide applications with a combined pot of £250,000. Lot 1 will include vehicle activated signs (VAS), white gates and other effective road safety interventions. This round closes on the 2nd February with the aim to evaluate and award successful projects for the start of the next financial year.

Regional collaboration

27. The PCC received his quarterly briefing in respect of the serious and organised crime threat (SOC) from force colleagues and from the Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU) in October. The PCC reiterated the need for ROCU to work closely with the force to provide the best service for local communities.
28. The PCC had his quarterly CT briefing in October which gave assurance that West Midlands CTU is effectively mitigating and managing the threat and risk to communities in West Mercia. Conversations specifically centred around the prison estate and Prevent referrals from West Mercia communities.
29. The PCC attended the Regional Governance Group meeting in October alongside his PCC colleagues from Staffordshire, West Midlands and Warwickshire and the respective Chief Constables. Updates from the ROCU, the regional Counter Terrorism Unit, National Police Air Service and Regional Operations were received.
30. The regional criminal justice arrangements are continuing to be developed and LCJB connectivity across the region will be refreshed imminently so as to consider more shared regional approaches in criminal justice conversations.

Criminal justice

31. A PCC led workshop took place in November bringing together partners from across the criminal justice system (CJS). The workshop was a success with clear activity and measures of success agreed for both LCJB and the Victims Board. This work will now be followed up through the normal meeting process.
32. Tackling court backlogs remains a priority for the LCJB. A court backlog task and finish group was established in September and centred on the development of a standalone action plan to tackle the significant backlogs and improve processes and outcomes for victims and witnesses. This action plan was also further developed in the November

workshop, with a further meeting of the task and finish group taking place in December to drive activity.

33. Overall performance in the CJS in West Mercia remains stable since the last panel report:

- The conviction rate for the Magistrates Court sits at 85% in West Mercia, comparable to the regional and national average (84%).
- Witness Attendance rates remain high at 86%, this is above the regional and national average.
- West Mercia are 6th highest in the country for guilty pleas at first hearing in the Crown Court.

34. The Victims' Board meeting took place in January 2024 and involved further developing the Board's performance metrics, data sharing agreements and priority commitments from partners agreed at the joint workshop in November 2023. This meeting included a victim's video account of their experience of the CJS and a review of the national HMICFRS Inspection of how well the Police, CPS and Probation Service support victims of crime.

Serious Violence

35. Following the Data Sharing events organised by the Serious Violence Partnership Manager, the missing datasets from partners have been re-requested for input and analysis within the OPCC Serious Violence Needs Assessment. The PCC has pushed the requests and a revised more condensed product, together with executive summary is anticipated for February 2024. This will ensure the needs assessment contains all relevant partner information as required under the duty to inform the landscape review and future direction for Serious Violence.

36. Proposals for allocation of the non-labour and labour components of the Serious Violence Duty funding for the remainder of 2023/24 and 2024/25 will be discussed and formalised at the February Crime Reduction Board (CRB), which is the approved governance structure for signing off / decision making in response to the duty.

Combatting drugs partnerships (CDPs)

37. The last set of CDP meetings took place in December, chaired by the PCC.

38. Partners shared their local delivery plans which was used by the OPCC to develop a West Mercia-wide CDP delivery plan aligned with the national outcomes framework. Partners also presented narrative reports highlighting successes, challenges, and risks related to reducing drug use and associated harm.

39. Partners from each Local Authority (LA) submitted their local data profiles for drug treatment and recovery which were used to populate the PCC's CDP performance dashboard. Gaps in data were discussed, and the force and Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) were tasked with sharing data around reducing drug related crime and hospital admissions respectively.

40. LA partners have expressed interest in piloting a Naloxone Scheme in West Mercia. Discussions between the OPCC, force and partners are ongoing via the CDPs with a

focus on funding, training, and governance. LA leads will progress approval of the scheme at their local substance misuse groups. However, the force is still in the process of pulling together a report to go through internal governance processes. The report will build on force engagement with partners, the Police Federation and legal services and will enable Chief Officers to consider how a pilot could progress with appropriate governance. The force will report back to the CDPs once the report is finalised and approved.

Reforming West Mercia

41. The PCC has set a Net Budget Requirement of £273m. Following additional funding and use of reserves the total budget for the year is £277m. A central element of the budget investment was a commitment of an additional 40 officers to support front line policing.
42. The force have a robust process in place for ensuring that West Mercia maintains the target number of police officers. The modelling by the Force provides reassurance that they are on target to achieve the establishment target at the end of March 2024, which will ensure that the PCC receive the full government funding available to support policing activity.
43. With the establishment target achieved it has enabled the force to deliver the Neighbourhood Crime Fighting Teams commitment set out at the start of the year. These resources, along with the commitment for 10 Community Safety Engagement officers have put greater focus on addressing key community concerns, such as ASB and the harm caused by illegal drugs. These teams are now out in communities focusing on effectively responding to emerging crime patterns in those areas.
44. The PCC is delivering on his commitment to replace Redditch Police Station; working with the Fire Service to ensure that the force and partners have the right building to deliver public services in that locality for decades to come. The building is on schedule to be completed by the end of 2024. The PCC is also overseeing the progression of other capital projects such as on new Firearms facility and a SARC to ensure that the Police have the right facilities to train their officers to deliver good public service and to ensure that victims are supported.
45. In the last 3 months the force has continued to deliver on the budget investment in the digital transformation agenda. The force has delivered the ambitious programme of moving nearly 3500 officers and staff onto Microsoft 365. This achievement means that the force can look to implement the wealth of technological solutions that are available to drive efficiency in how policing for the public is delivered and realise both operational and financial benefits, whilst resolving remaining implementation challenges.
46. Since the last report to the Panel, the PCC has also approved additional capital investment in the Digital Forensic Unit in a Case Management solution. This investment will ensure that the service is effectively handling requests to investigate some of the most serious and harmful crimes in an efficient and effective way. Effective management of demand will improve investigatory outcomes as well as ensuring compliance with regularity requirements.
47. Previous reports to the panel have included details of the PCC's investment within the Firearms Licensing Unit (FLU), including investment in staff and fleet. The impact of

this investment is monitored through regular reporting to the West Mercia Governance Board and biannual PCC reports to the Policing Minister. The next report to the Minister will be drafted at the end of January 2024.

48. Latest data from the force (as at 13 December 2023) indicates that members of the public are waiting as long as 248 days for a new shotgun certificate, and 400 days for a new firearms certificate. Whilst this is in excess of the target set by the PCC at the time of initial investment in April (150 days), it is a considerable improvement compared to the previous quarter, particularly in respect of firearms grant (previous longest waiting time reported at 660 days).
49. The force remains committed to significantly expanding capacity of the FLU and have provided reassurance that this will lead to improved wait times and enhanced service delivery over the next 2 quarters. Options to increase capacity of the FLU are being considered as part of budgetary proposals.

Estates

50. As part of ensuring the West Mercia Police Estate is fit-for-purpose, with buildings that support new technology, the PCC has undertaken a 'pilot' LED Lighting installation at Kidderminster Police Station. This will see significant savings in energy consumption and annual revenue costs. Further LED Lighting installations for 2024/25 are proposed at Worcester and Telford Divisional HQs and Hindlip HQ.
51. Work on major capital projects continues at a good pace, in respect of:
- A new Police & Fire combined hub at the Middlehouse Lane site in Redditch. There has been significant progress with the erection of the building structure and external cladding well underway. The new facility remains on track for completion October 2024.
 - The closure of the existing Redditch Police Station was completed on time in October 2023, to allow demolition works which have since commenced.
 - Following the closure, the force has successfully relocated to a new temporary location based in the Kingfisher Shopping Centre, Redditch. The force has moved in fully and this location is fully operational.
 - A comprehensive communications plan and targeted information campaign has ensured residents and communities are aware of the new location. In addition, a new digital kiosk to support public access to services has been installed at the external entrance to this temporary location.
 - A new Firearms Range & Training School at Hindlip HQ. Architects have been appointed, together with the appointment of a principal designer, and planning consultants. Various site surveys and investigations have been completed and RIBA Stage 2 design completed also, with a cost report due mid-January 2024. A pre-application for planning permission has also been submitted to the LA.
52. As part of the ongoing process to identify key estates infrastructure, the estates team commissioned a full condition survey of the Heating, Ventilation and Aircon (HVAC) systems. Surveys have been completed for HQs at Shrewsbury, Telford, Kidderminster & Worcester. This data will be utilised along the same lines as the previous building fabric condition surveys going forward to better inform long term financial, operational and strategic planning and decision making.

53. Hereford Police Station has not been commissioned at this stage as it will be reviewed as part of the proposed feasibility into a refurbishment of the site as a whole.

54. A central tenet of the Estates Strategy 2021-26 is that West Mercia's Estate will be fit for purpose. To achieve this, the PCC has provisioned significant additional investment through the annual planned programmes of minor works and refurbishments. This has led to notable recent improvements in the estate built fabric condition, performance, and management, whilst acknowledging more work is required.

55. Ongoing delivery of the annual planned programme of minor works & refurbishments continues with the improvements to numerous areas of the Estate. These projects range from minor window replacements to major internal refurbishments and have a relatively even and proportionate spread across the whole force area.

56. Almost 100 projects are budgeted and scheduled within the Estates annual capital and revenue programmes across the OPCC West Mercia Estate in 2023/24. Examples include, but are not limited to the following;

- Bridgnorth Police Station - Major roof replacement & internal refurbishment and improvement works
- Droitwich Police Station - Health & Safety and Security improvements
- Hereford Police Station - Internal redecoration works. Access and security improvements
- Hindlip HQ - Various internal office refurbishments & improvements to Dog Section accommodation & training facilities
- Hindlip HQ - Significant investment in critical Data Room cooling infrastructure and ancillary services
- Various Sites - Redecoration and refurbishment of offices and staff welfare areas
- Various sites - Replacement of heating and power supply infrastructure and improvements to building fabric
- Custody Facilities - Improvements to security and building fabric

57. Commercial advantage is a central premise of the Estates Strategy, focused on delivering the best possible value for money and enabling as much investment as possible into key services and infrastructure. Work in this regard over the last year has focused on maximising additional income and minimising costs wherever possible. A review and closer management of contracts is supporting significant efficiencies within the service.

- Reduced supply chain with numerous term contracts renegotiated on better service terms and costs, achieving value for money and revenue operational savings.
- More than £100,000 has been removed from West Mercia's waste management contract.
- In total, efficiencies totalling more than £330,000 are projected for delivery through improved management of estate contracts per year.

58. The Estates Team continue to identify potential savings from the estate's revenue budget, as well as potential capital receipt, through reasonable disposal of assets. Assets identified and in the process of disposal by 31/03/24 include:

- Disposal of the Freehold of the Land off Holmer Road, Hereford, HR4 9SW. The PCC purchased a 2.8-acre plot of land off Holmer Road, Hereford HR4 9SW, in December 2018 with the intention of developing a joint police and fire station for West Mercia Police and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service. However, in 2023, the partners officially decided not to proceed with this project. Thus, the land was deemed surplus to requirement and earmarked for disposal. The PCC has since approved this disposal, to the interested party (Wye Valley NHS Trust) negotiations are ongoing.
- Disposal of the residential properties that are The Firs & The Orchards (located at Hindlip HQ site Worcester) - sale agreed for The Orchards. The Firs out to market
- Disposal of the residential property located at 42A Albert Road Malvern – in marketing phase.
- Disposal of the redundant and vacant Evesham Community Contact Centre located at Evesham Police Station site – in marketing phase.

Financial management

59. The draft budget for 2024/25 has been presented at the PCP, along with the proposed precept increase. Even with the proposed increase in the precept the PCC has had to take action to reduce service expenditure in order to present a balanced budget. The PCC has sought reassurance from the force that they have prepared a budget which meets the service requirements for safe and effective policing, prioritises visible and accessible policing, better outcomes from investigations and improved public contact, whilst recognising that there is a limited amount of funding available.

60. The review of the financial position at the end of quarter 3 highlighted an underspend against the budget year to date, with a projected underspend by the end of the financial year of £1.583m. This is a small change from the £1.337m reported in Q2. No action is considered necessary given the underspend reported.

Reassuring West Mercia

Communication and engagement

61. Between November 1 2023 - January 1 2024, 28 press releases and statements have been issued. This resulted in 213 items of media coverage, helping to ensure that the PCC maintains a visible presence across West Mercia's communities, playing his part in community leadership and providing reassurance where necessary.

62. The PCC, Deputy PCC and Assistant PCC continue to carry out engagements with communities, such as attending parish council meetings, visiting local community groups, and those that receive funding from the PCC. A total of 35 engagements have taken place between November and January.

63. Throughout December, the PCC team visited the three counties to seek the views of the community on the PCC budget. This saw the team visit Worcester, Kidderminster, Hereford, Shrewsbury and Telford to give the public the chance to complete the survey in-person.
64. In total there were 915 responses to the consultation which ran from Friday 8 December to Sunday 7 January. Results are included as an appendix to the Budget Report.
65. The PCC continues to monitor his engagement and reach with communities across social media. Between November to January, 540 posts were uploaded, more than 5,700 people engaged with posts, and 460 new followers were gained. There are now 18,738 people signed up for PCC news updates via the Neighbourhood Matters system and 1,863 receiving the PCC's monthly newsletter. The PCC continues to send monthly newsletters to MPs to ensure they are sighted on activity in their constituencies.
66. Between November to January, approx. 7,577 people visited the PCC's website. Through an ongoing commitment to improve the website, the website is up to date across various pages, with a focus on maintaining this. Work also continues to ensure the website complies with accessibility regulations.
67. The PCC relaunched his Roads Focus campaign in November. The campaign focuses on road safety and gives the community a chance to talk to the PCC and key partners about their concerns and priorities related to road safety.
68. Starting in Herefordshire, two drop-in events took place in Ledbury and Leominster in December. As part of the campaign, the PCC promoted two free driver awareness sessions to give the community an opportunity to refresh their knowledge of the Highway Code. These sessions were very successful with one taking place in-person and another online. The campaign will continue in January with four sessions being held in Worcestershire, including: Malvern, Wythall, Bewdley and Broadway.
69. A follow-up Community Conversation event also took place in Pershore in November, following the PCC's visit in May. The PCC was joined by West Mercia Police's Temporary Chief Constable Alex Murray and South Worcestershire Area Commander, Superintendent Rebecca Love, who gave an update on the work being done in and around Pershore to tackle concerns and improve the visibility and accessibility of officers.
70. During the period November to January, the PCC's office dealt with 380 new pieces of casework. The most common themes were around complaint reviews, contact regarding the road safety grant, firearms delays, ASB, road safety, and budget proposals. There has also been increased contact by persistent complainants. As a result of this, the PCC, Deputy PCC, or Assistant PCC have visited areas of concern, sought assurance, and have made contact with correspondents to understand the issues and identify solutions, if necessary.

Local Policing Charter update

71. Ensuring West Mercia Police delivers the commitments set out in the Local Policing Community Charter is a key priority in the Safer West Mercia Plan. The Charter sets

out how the force will work with partners and the public to listen, understand and respond to community issues. The Charter is shaped by six key themes: visibility and accessibility, responding to communities, prevention, vulnerability, relationships and partnerships.

72. In May 2022 a review of the Local Policing Community Charter was completed. The review sought to understand how West Mercia Police have performed against each of the six themes and included recommendations to ensure the Charter evolved and delivered continuous improvement for West Mercia communities. The majority of recommendations have been completed.
73. The force has made progress in delivering against commitments to be more visible and accessible to communities, using both traditional methods (engagement vans, posters A-boards) and investments in technology such as Neighbourhood Matters.
74. Neighbourhood Matters launched in July 2021 and is an essential vehicle for delivery of the Charter. The total number of users has continued to go grow and the force reached the target of 30,000 users in April 2023 (38,008 users as of December 2023). Neighbourhood Matters is used to disseminate information and advice to the public, publicise SNT contact details, undertake targeted surveys to better understand local issues, and provides functionality that enables the force to track engagement activity digitally.
75. As part of the Charter, the force agree up to three priorities each quarter with all Town and Parish Councils who wish to engage. An agreed Parish Council Contact Contract provides a clear understanding of the preferred method and frequency of contact and identified priorities to be addressed. Priorities most commonly centre on speeding, crime (particularly theft) and ASB. A similar approach has now been taken to identify priorities across local secondary schools.
76. SNTs commit to attending Parish Council meetings on a quarterly basis. Not all councils accept this offer; some prefer to receive a written update on activity or defer attendance until new priorities are set. SNTs attended or provided updates as requested to Parish Councils on 209 occasions between 1st September and 30th November 2023.
77. As part of the Safer West Mercia Plan, the PCC committed to seek feedback in respect of the commitments made in the Community Charter. A key mechanism for seeking this feedback is the PCC's annual Town and Parish Council Survey¹. The latest survey in 2023 found the following:
 - Awareness of the local policing charter has steadily increased since 2021 from 67% to 83% in 2023.
 - There has been a considerable increase in the police contacting Town and Parish Councils to identify local priorities, increasing from 55% in 2021 to 80% in 2023.
 - However only 50% of respondents to the survey believe the police have acted on priorities; and the majority do not think the Charter has resulted in less crime or increased feelings of safety.

¹ Please note the response rate for the survey equated too approximately 37% of all Town and Parish Councils in West Mercia (highest response since the inception of the survey). Results may not be representative of all Town and Parish Councils.

78. Force wide resources across a range of departments (e.g. road safety and force operations) and volunteer watch schemes (e.g. community speed watch) are integral to supporting SNT to deliver against local priorities. Further support to the Charter has been provided through the PCC funded uplift in officer which has enabled the introduction of Community Safety Engagement Officers and Neighbourhood Crime Fighting Teams.
79. The Charter's work around prevention and vulnerability is supported by the force's problem-solving teams and the joint PCC / force Prevention Strategy. Further improvements in multi-agency data collection are integral to understanding and addressing threats within the community and work is ongoing to establish required data sharing agreements and protocols with partners.
80. As part of the prevention strand, in January 2023, the force identified 'Impact Areas'; Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) that suffer from high levels of crime and disorder, high levels of calls for service and low levels of confidence in policing. Areas were identified through a wide set of data, including data from health and public health.
81. In response the force deployed an additional, dedicated neighbourhood policing officer into each LSOA. These officers had additional training in problem solving, trauma informed practice, engagement and the force ensured 'ring-fencing' from abstractions. Early indications are showing improvements in reducing crime and increasing confidence levels through this targeted approach, with Brookside in Telford showing a reduction of 43% of all crime types year on year.
82. The impact of the Charter continues to be monitored through an established performance framework and delivery plan, reviewed regularly through a Local Policing Charter Governance Group. A substantive update on the Charter will be presented to the PCC and Chief Constable at the West Mercia Governance Board in January 2024.

Performance and accountability

Assurance and accountability (A&A) meetings

83. The A&A timetable for 2023/24 is published on the PCC's website. Areas of focus are informed by performance monitoring, horizon scanning of emerging issues or legislative changes, and local / national policing priorities. Two formal meetings have taken place since the last update:
- 11 December 2023: Performance Meeting - Quarter 2 2023/24 focused on the HMICFRS Victim Service Assessment (VSA), outcomes, complaints and conduct, acquisitive crime, and the national beating crime plan.
 - 19 December 2023: Thematic meeting – Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) focused on DA including officer training, local and national strategy, key performance indicators and the victims' voice.
84. The minutes from the performance and thematic meetings are published on the PCC's website ([Assurance and Accountability Meetings - West Mercia Police Crime Commissioner \(westmercia-pcc.gov.uk\)](https://www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk/assurances-and-accountability-meetings)). Key outcomes from the meetings this quarter are summarised below:

- The force provided an update on progress following the HMICFRS VSA revisit.
- The PCCs Head of Commissioning to work more closely with the Chief Officer leads to ensure PCC commissioned services for DA are fully utilised by the force and to identify any gaps in current provision.

85. The Public A+A on the 29 January focused on crime that had the most significant impact on towns, particularly retail crime. The public and local retailers / businesses are able to submit questions to be put to the Chief Constable. Questions can be submitted via the PCC's social media channels.

86. The PCC's A&A meeting programme is supplemented by an ad-hoc, virtual element that enables the PCC to raise issues that do not fall within the remit of a performance or thematic meeting or require a more immediate response. Ad-hoc A&A requests are sent to the Chief Constable via email, who provides a response in writing. Since the last update, the PCC submitted 1 ad-hoc request on retail crime.

87. The ad hoc A&A on retail crime seeks reassurance that all elements of the recently published NPCC retail crime action plan are being implemented locally by the force. This includes a commitment to follow all reasonable lines of enquiry. A response is due at the end of January and will facilitate discussions during the public A&A.

Force performance reports

88. The PCC scrutinises performance regularly, utilising a weekly performance dashboard and monthly and quarterly summary reports. A copy of the Q2 2023/24 performance report can be found on the PCC's website: [Police Quarterly Performance Reports - West Mercia Police Crime Commissioner \(westmercia-pcc.gov.uk\)](https://www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk/performance-reports).

89. Below are some key performance areas of note:

- Crime Volumes: reductions continue to be seen across a number of key crime types including total recorded crime when compared to the same period last year. Residential burglary and vehicle offences have seen small increases during the same period.
- Recording around outcomes: West Mercia continue to see improvements in levels of action taken against offenders when compared to the same period last year.
- Response times: performance has remained stable for Grade 1 incidents although is largely below the force's target. Following a review of how the force grades incidents, the force has seen a notable improvement in grade 2 response times.
- Victim satisfaction: the methodology for reporting on victim satisfaction has been amended. Of note, the force's reporting of 'satisfied' now includes those that were completely, very and fairly satisfied (previous methodology only included those that were completely or very satisfied). This was discussed at the performance A&A in June. As a result of these changes, the force are now meeting their satisfaction targets for burglary, violent and hate crime. Domestic abuse satisfaction currently sits just below the target.

- Call handling: Both 999 and 101 have seen a notable reduction in performance in 23/24. This is due to a number of factors impacting the call centre including an increased demand and system issues. However, there has been significant improvements since with the implementation of the switchboard.

90. These performance trends are used to inform the agenda setting for the quarterly performance A&A meetings, as well as ad-hoc A&A requests if there is a pressing performance issue.

West Mercia Perception Survey

91. Headline findings from the latest West Mercia perception survey (Q2 2023/24) are presented below.

92. The majority of residents (81%) agreed that they had confidence in West Mercia Police with a similar proportion confident that they would receive a good service from the force (82%), this is comparable to findings in the previous period.

93. Around 72% of residents agreed that West Mercia Police understood the issues that affect their community, this is comparable to the previous quarter.

94. 88% said they were confident they could access the police in an emergency and 70% in a non-emergency – similar to the previous quarter.

95. 19% said they see an officer or PCSO at least once per week, this is comparable to findings in the previous period. 61% of residents are satisfied with the levels of policing in their area which is an improvement on the previous quarter.

96. Public confidence remains a local and national priority and the PCC continues to engage with the Home Secretary and the APCC around improving police visibility and accessibility for members of the public.

HMICFRS Inspection Reports

97. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) has published two national inspection reports and one national super-complaint report since the last PCP meeting:

- December 2023: Report on the Criminal Justice Alliance's super-complaint – Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 and independent community scrutiny of stop and search,
- December 2023: Inspection of the effectiveness of the police and law enforcement bodies' response to group based child sexual exploitation (CSE) in England and Wales,
- December 2023: Inspection of how well the police, the Crown Prosecution Service and the Probation Service support victims of crime.

82. West Mercia Police was not inspected as part of any of the national inspections. The super-complaint and the inspection on group based CSE included a number of recommendations for all Chief Constables. The force is required to provide the PCC

with an update against each of these recommendations within 8 weeks of the national reports being published (due end of Jan - early Feb 2024).

83. The PCC will use the force updates to provide a formal response to the Home Secretary in relation to each report. This response will be published on the PCC's website. The updates will also be reviewed to determine whether any further activity is required through the PCC's A&A programme.
84. The joint inspection on support to victims of crime did not include any recommendations for local Chief Constables. The recommendations were for national agencies including the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), NPCC, Home Office, CPS, Probation and the College of Policing. However, based on the findings the report will be taken to the PCC's Victims Board in January 2024. This board is attended by partners from the force, CPS and probation and will provide an opportunity to ensure all partners are sighted on the report, and to discuss the impact of national recommendations locally.
85. The last performance report to the panel provided a brief update on the West Mercia Victim Service Assessment (VSA) letter that was published by HMICFRS in October 2023. The letter set out the inspectorate's findings following a revisit to West Mercia Police in July 2023. The revisit focused on progress made by the force to address a cause of concern identified during the 2021/22 police efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy (PEEL) programme. Progress was assessed by repeating the VSA.
86. The findings of the VSA were subject to formal scrutiny through the PCC's quarterly performance A&A meeting in December 2023. The T/CC was asked to provide an assessment of force performance as set out in the VSA letter and provide an update on activity to address any outstanding recommendations and areas for improvement (AFIs). The oversight and scrutiny activity through A&A was used to provide a formal response to the Home Secretary which has been published on the PCC's website: <https://www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk/performance-information/performance-information-hmicfrs/>
87. The PCC was pleased to confirm that the VSA identified a number of recommendations and areas for improvement (AFI) which could be closed as a result of the considerable progress made by West Mercia Police over the last 6 months. In particular, the force was able to demonstrate considerable improvements in how it keeps victims updated, provides crime prevention advice, assesses victims' needs and consults with victims regarding the outcome of investigations. However, the VSA confirmed that there is further scope to improve performance for victims in West Mercia, and as a result, the cause of concern will remain.
88. The PCC and T/CC are committed to addressing the cause of concern with various activity in train including the development of a revised improvement plan, a review of supervisor ratios and training, greater involvement of forensics staff at the point of a call for service, Project Switch in the call centre, and the implementation of the most appropriate agency and incident grading policies. The investigative quality sergeants funded by the PCC also continue to embed and have already had a tangible impact on performance against key AFIs. The force continues to review progress through robust audits to ensure performance improves and this will be monitored by the PCC.
89. Scrutiny through formal A&A meetings is supplemented by regular meetings between the PCC's Policy team, the force's HMICFRS leads and the force liaison officer within

HMICFRS to ensure the PCC remains sighted on upcoming inspection activity and reporting.

Risk Management Implications

None.

Financial Implications

None.

Legal Implications

None

Equality Implications

None.

Supporting Information

None

Contact Points

For the Police and Crime Panel: Samantha Morris, Interim Democratic, Governance and Scrutiny Manager, Worcestershire County Council
Tel: 01905 844963
Email: sjmorris@worcestershire.gov.uk

For the Police and Crime Commissioner: Gareth Boulton, Police and Crime Commissioner, Chief Executive
gareth.boulton@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.

[All agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website](#)



WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL 7 FEBRUARY 2024

WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS END OF TERM REPORT

Recommendation

1. Members of the Panel are asked to note the draft report.

Background

2. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) was first elected in May 2016 and then re-elected in May 2021 (the elections having been postponed for a year due to the Covid-19 pandemic).
3. The Commissioner's current term of office will come to an end in May 2024. A report has been drafted outlining key PCC activity, priorities and outcomes during the current term of office.
4. The report is constructed and centred around core elements of the Commissioner's Safer West Mercia Plan and key statutory functions.
5. The final report will be published following any appropriate amendments in the coming weeks, ahead of the end of the PCC's term of office.

Risk Management Implications

None.

Financial Implications

None.

Legal Implications

None

Equality Implications

None.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Draft End of Term Report

Supporting Information

None

Contact Points

For the Police and Crime Panel: Samantha Morris, Interim Democratic, Governance and Scrutiny Manager, Worcestershire County Council

Tel: 01905 844963

Email: sjmorris@worcestershire.gov.uk

For the Police and Crime Commissioner: Gareth Boulton, Police and Crime Commissioner, Chief Executive

gareth.boulton@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.

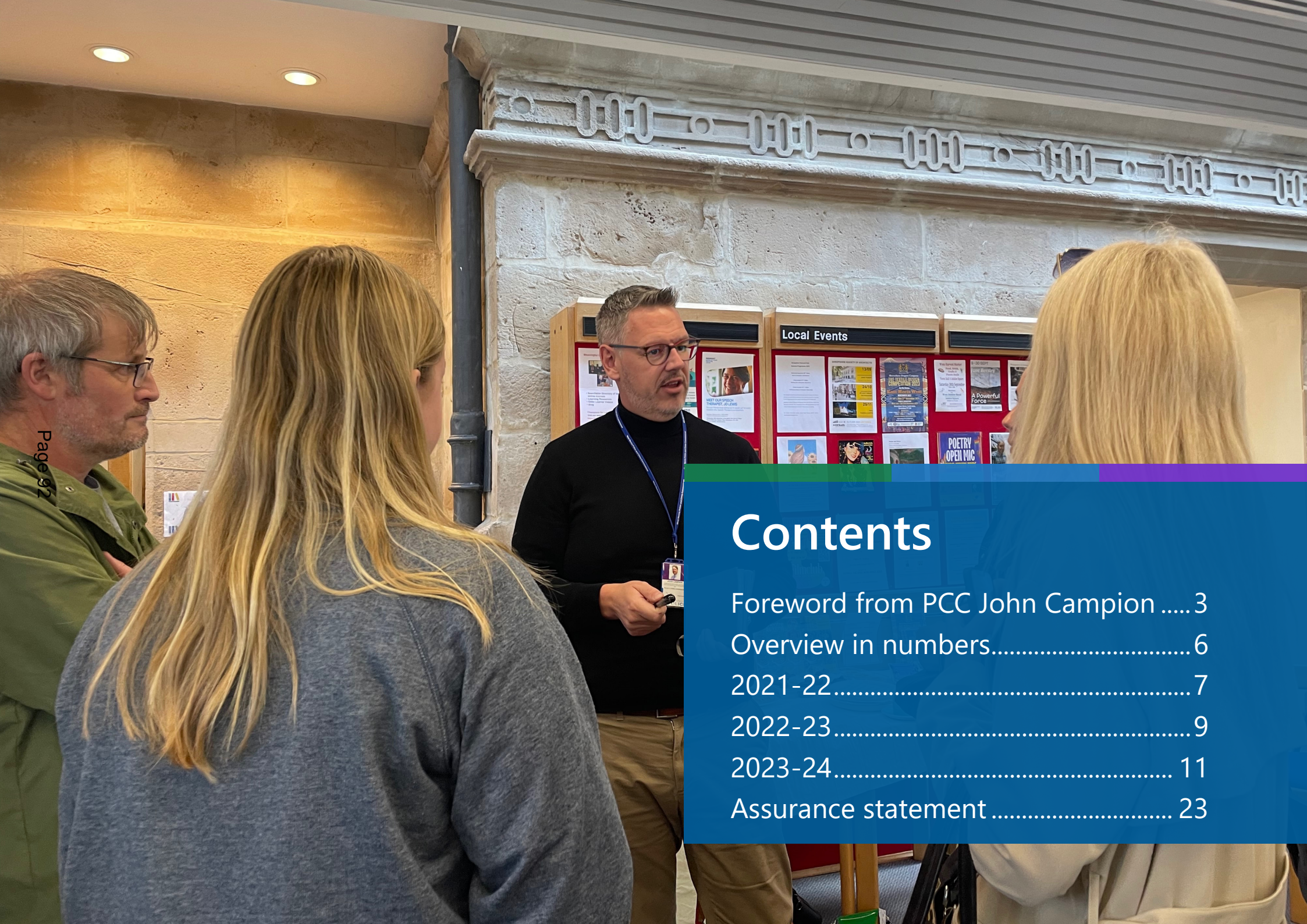
[All agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website](#)



End of term report



John Campion
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia



Contents

Foreword from PCC John Campion	3
Overview in numbers.....	6
2021-22.....	7
2022-23.....	9
2023-24.....	11
Assurance statement	23

Foreword from PCC John Campion

I write an end of term report to demonstrate the progress that I have made, and by working in partnership with West Mercia Police and other key partners, in delivering my Safer West Mercia Plan.

With this being a three-year term, due to the Covid pandemic, it reinforced the need to act quickly. Despite the shortened term of office, my aspirations for our communities were and continue to be in no way shortened. I am focused on doing everything in my power to improve the service the public receives from their police force, ensuring people are protected from harm and that they feel safe, and are safe.

Over the last three years, I have been proud to allocate more than £3 million in funding for victim services, recognising how important it is that victims and survivors of crime have access to the right support in order for them to cope and recover. I continue to focus not just on the victim service provision, but also the prevention element to ensure that harm isn't caused, and crimes are prevented from happening in the first place.



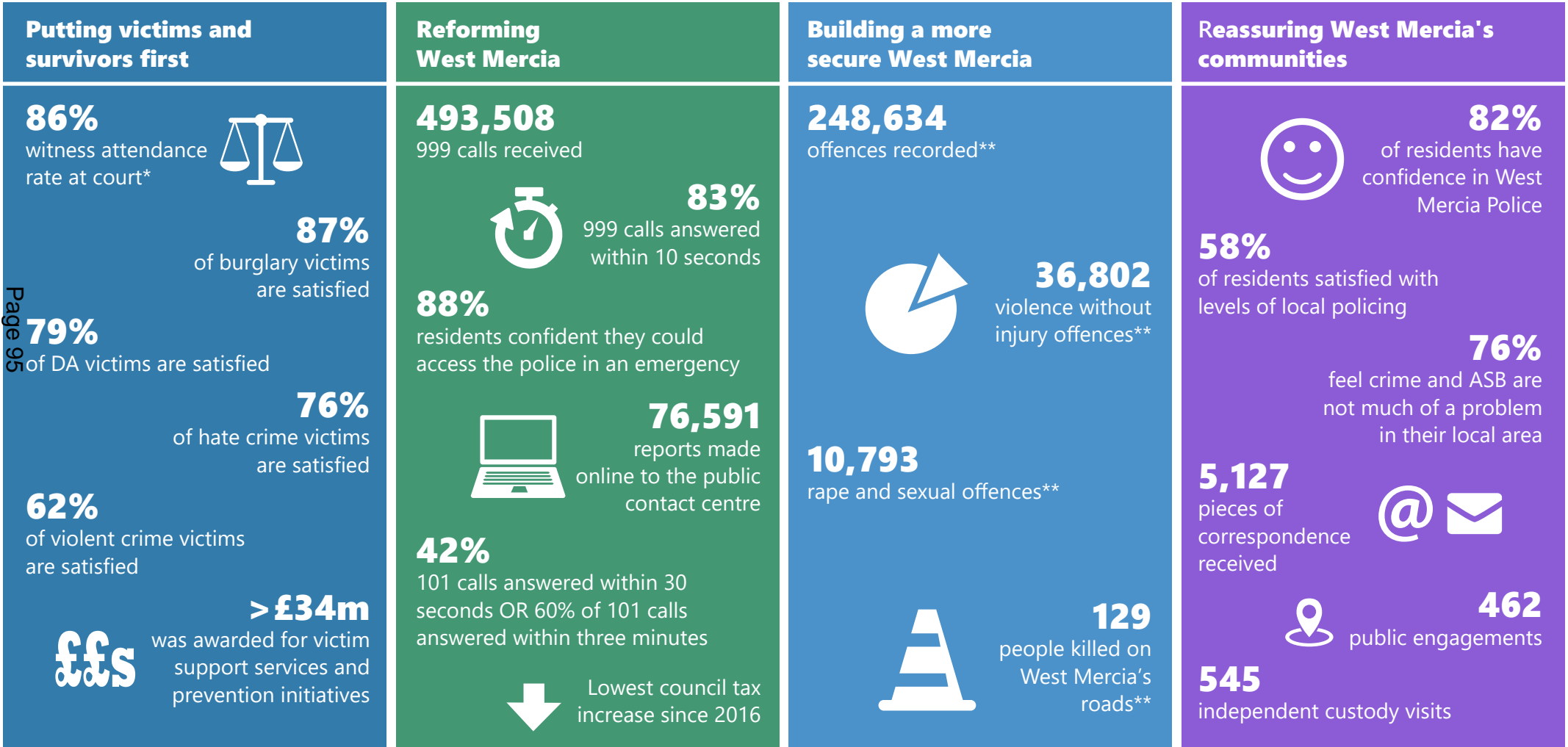
I continue to balance my role of challenging and supporting West Mercia Police, steadfast in refusing to accept that our communities should receive anything less than a high-quality service from their police service. I am also committed to ensuring the force is focused on transformation, which is central to delivering ever more efficient and effective policing. This is reflected in my ongoing investment in ICT and the police estate, in order to deliver innovative projects that improve joint working between emergency services.

A central tenant of my Safer West Mercia Plan recognises the importance that the public places on the accessibility and visibility of police officers. Which is why, as part of my budget setting each year, I have continued to ensure investment and resources are focused on boosting police officer numbers. Building on the support that was given by the Government as part of the national Police Uplift Programme, I have boosted police officer numbers by 256 since 2021 – this has resulted in the force reaching its highest establishment figure on record.

I am committed to building a safer West Mercia, with this report explaining the work that has been undertaken to deliver on my priorities on behalf of our communities.



Overview of term in numbers



Page 95

* Q3 23/24

** April 21- December 23



2021-22

2021-22 highlights

May

- John Campion is re-elected as the PCC for West Mercia and is officially sworn into office.
- The PCC secures £2 million for victims of violence and abuse.

£2M

July

- Majority of Covid restrictions are lifted.
- A new Chief Constable is confirmed for West Mercia.
- Community messaging platform, Neighbourhood Matters, launches.



September

- Sentencing takes place, following the murder of Sarah Everard, prompting a greater focus on violence against women and girls.

June

- PCC secures more than £800k to deliver the Safer Streets the initiative in Redditch and Sutton Hill, Telford.

£800k



August

- PCC launches consultation on his Safer West Mercia Plan and the focus for policing.
- PCC secures £455k to support the delivery of domestic abuse perpetrator programmes across West Mercia.

October

- PCC secures £1m, as part of the Safer Streets fund, to tackle violence against women and girls.

£1M

November

- PCC announces two Assistant PCCs to focus on engaging with communities and ensuring their voices are heard.



January

- PCC commits to a further 125 police officers as part of budget proposals.
- Planning is submitted for a new joint police and fire hub in Redditch.

March

- Online Safety Bill is introduced by the Government.



December

- PCC invests a further £50k for e-bikes to support West Mercia Police be more visible in communities.



February

- PCC invests £100k to tackle fly-tipping.



Summary of activity 2021-22

Putting victims and survivors first

I'm committed to ensuring that people are at the heart of my Safer West Mercia Plan, and this includes putting victims and survivors right at the centre of the criminal justice system. I want every victim to get support that is tailored and appropriate and helps them to cope and recover with whatever harm has come to them.

Within this section, I will be highlighting the services I have been proud to support which are focused on providing support to victims of a number of serious crimes.

- In May, I secured **£2 million** from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). This funding was allocated to AXIS and the West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre (WMRSASC) to fund 20 new Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) and Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) roles. This allowed specialist support to be given to young people and children, as well as people with physical learning difficulties and within minority groups.
- In June, I secured further MoJ funding of **£250k** to enable specialist support services to help abuse victims. One of which being Parental Education Growth Support (PEGS) to support parents who are abused by their children, be it physical, financial, emotional, or sexual behaviour displayed by children of any age. This was backed with a further £10k in February.
- Following the impact of the Covid pandemic, in July I provided further funding, on top of the **£1.7 million** allocated, to **WMRSASC** to ensure the service could continue providing vital support for victims of rape.
- In July, I called for the Government to provide financial support regarding **Op Lincoln** investigation, into the care of mothers and babies at the Shrewsbury and Telford NHS Trust, in order to ensure those affected were supported appropriately as the investigation is carried out.

- In August, I was pleased to allocate more than **£455k** to support domestic abuse perpetrator programmes, **Male and Masculinities and My Time**, as well as a consultant to assess what is needed in order to deliver a West Mercia wide programme.
- Following a successful bid to the MoJ's Critical Support Fund, I was able to provide **£350k** to a variety of services, such as the **Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service**, that support victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence.
- After **violence against women and girls** (VAWG) became more prevalent in the media, in December I provided more than £9k to provide drink spiking training as well as funding for **90,000 bottle spikeys** and **50,000 drink covers** for people to use when out in the nighttime economy.
- I have been proud to fund the **DRIVE** project, which is focused on working with perpetrators of domestic abuse and challenging them to change their behaviour. In January the funding was extended for a further three years totalling **£2 million**.



Putting victims and survivors first



£9.752m

was spent in total on commissioned services, which includes prevention projects which are outlined in 'Building a More Secure West Mercia'



57,097

victims were contacted by the Victim Advice Line, with **97%** reporting a positive outcome in the same period

1,600

victims were referred to Victim Support for support with identified needs and longer-term support. **89%** of those leaving the service felt better able to cope



70%

of victims were satisfied with the overall service provided by West Mercia Police



100%

69

cases were referred to the Victim Support Restorative Justice service with **100%** of victims leaving the process reporting feeling better able to cope and recover, 94% reporting improved wellbeing



1,678

victims were referred to the ISVA service for advocacy and support



940

high risk victims of domestic abuse were supported by the West Mercia Women's Aid IDVA service with **90%** seeing positive outcomes and a reduction or end in physical abuse

Building a more secure West Mercia

As PCC, reducing crime, re-offending and ensuring people are safe remains a key commitment of mine for the communities of West Mercia. Being safe is non-negotiable and I will continue to ensure the police have the resources, plans and focus they need to relentlessly fight crime and keep all of our communities safe from harm.

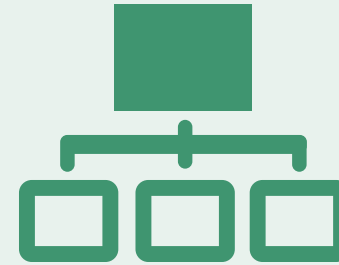
The following will highlight how I delivered on that commitment:

- As a result of the Government's Police Uplift Programme, and further investment from my 2021 budget, police officer numbers were to reach the highest level with **165** extra police officers since the national programme began two years ago, with an additional 56 joining in October 2021.
- In June, I was pleased to start working with local authorities to deliver community focused projects in **Greenlands**, Redditch, and **Sutton Hill**, Telford, after securing **£800k** from the Government's **Safer Streets** fund.
- Understanding the impact water safety can have on people and their families and friends, through working with **RLSS UK**, I funded a dedicated Water Safety Education Manager to produce resources for young people and prevent water deaths. In February, supporting the theme of water safety and wider rescue work, I provided **£78k** to **West Mercia Search & Rescue** (WMSAR) and the **Severn Area Rescue Association** (SARA) to continue their work in search and rescue.
- As a result of money seized from proceeds of crime I, along with regional PCCs, gave money to the **DIVERT** project to offer early intervention to those who were found in possession of small amounts of drugs.
- In July, the Government produced a VAWG strategy which outlined their commitment to tackle the crimes that were causing concerns amongst females. I was therefore pleased to secure **£1 million**, as part of the **Safer Streets** fund, to tackle **VAWG**. The funding allowed for local projects to focus on education and improved lighting and landscaping in public spaces such as parks.

- Through working with West Mercia Police and **Fearless**, I supported the delivery of a series of workshops, aimed at young people aged between 10 and 18 years old, at risk of becoming involved in **knife crime**. The workshops in North Worcestershire had Pride of Britain winner Hezron Brown involved to speak to the young people about his experiences.
- Supporting my focus on VAWG, I provided more than **£4k** for **self-defence classes** to be delivered across West Mercia.
- After an increase in the volume of homicides was seen across West Mercia, I held a **holding to account** meeting seek assurance from the Chief Constable about what was being done to tackle this.
- With concerns of fly-tipping regularly raised in correspondence to my office, I provided **£100k** to tackle **fly-tipping** by opening a grant round for local authorities to apply for a portion. I also provided **£10k** for a **tyre tagging** scheme, which is an extension of the Smartwater property marking initiative.

87,059

offences were recorded



5

Rural and Business Officers funded to work with communities on crime prevention and awareness raising initiatives

£50K

given to each of the local policing areas (a total of £250K) to support small, localised initiatives focused on issues such as road safety and diversionary activity in the form of sports



2

Exploitation and Vulnerability Trainers whose aim is to make people aware of the signs and symptoms of exploitation, particularly amongst vulnerable and young people





Reforming West Mercia

I want the organisation to be one that uses its resources efficiently and effectively so that it maximises its service delivery to the public. Reforming West Mercia Police is a key part of what I want to deliver as PCC and is vital to respond to the current economic challenges, particularly the rising inflation that we have seen since the pandemic which ultimately impacts on costs. My focus for reform is very much on the police estate, technology, and people.

- In April an in-house estates service, that supports both West Mercia Police and Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, went live following a smooth transition from Place Partnership. This decision was made with the intention that this solution would provide a more dynamic and responsive approach to the force's needs. Both the force and I recognise that police officers, staff and volunteers need a **fit-for-purpose estate** and that progress in this business area had been too slow.

- As part of my commitment to reduce the **carbon footprint** of policing, whilst also boosting visibility of police officers in communities, I funded an **e-bike** for the Malvern policing team. Due to the success of this, I invested a further **£50k** for more e-bikes to be distributed across the force area.
- By working in partnership with Redditch Borough Council, Worcestershire County Council and Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, a site was identified to build a new, fit-for-purpose, **joint police and fire station** at the heart of the community in **Redditch**. The overall approved budget was £20 million, in order to deliver a project that will enable improved joint working.
- After committing to a four-year investment in **improving the ICT** across West Mercia Police, 2021 saw an increased focus on building the infrastructure to support the development of the technology. There was also a significant investment in digital forensics to ensure that the police have up-to-date technology to investigate crime and provide faster outcomes.

- Recognising the importance of ensuring crimes are investigated properly, I committed to fund increased capacity within **investigations**. A total of 17 posts were funded to investigate the crimes that cause the most harm in society such as homicide, sexual violence, and domestic abuse.
- Following a rigorous selection process, Pippa Mills was confirmed as the **Chief Constable** for West Mercia. This represented a milestone for the force as her appointment saw the first female Chief Constable in the force's history.
- Joint working between my office, West Mercia Police Dogs Section, and the Dogs Trust, saw the launch of a new **Animal Welfare Independent Visitor's Scheme**. The scheme, which is managed by the Independent Custody Visitor Coordinator, aims to ensure the welfare of those animals working within the force is protected.

£245.5m
budget



167,674

999 calls
received



253

new starters into West Mercia Police,
36% were female and 3.6% came
from an ethnic minority background

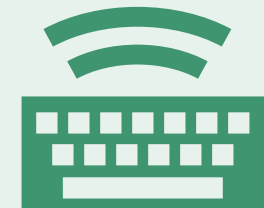
91

additional police
officers - 40 of which are
allocated into patrol to
further boost visibility
and public confidence



22,432

reports made
online to the
public contact
centre



20%

reduction in the
digital backlog as a
result of investment
into digital forensics

Reassuring West Mercia's Communities

I am clear that our communities not only are safe but feel safe too. People also need to be able to engage with both myself and their police to be confident that we are visible, accessible, understanding of local priorities and able to tackle them effectively.

I am committed to ensuring the public voice is reflected in policing and the decisions I make on their behalf. As I started this new term, I was pleased to see progress in a number of areas focused on boosting confidence, engaging with communities and priorities are focused on community concerns.

- A key milestone, in improving engagement with communities, was the introduction of **Neighbourhood Matters**. This alert system enables residents, businesses, and community groups across West Mercia to find out more about what is happening in their local community. An upgrade, a few months after its launch, made it easier for people to contact their local policing teams directly so they can raise any concerns and provide feedback.

- Addressing the public concerns around **road safety**, work began in July on an **average speed camera** scheme on the A449 in Worcestershire.



- As part of the VAWG agenda, I funded **10,000 personal safety alarms** which were distributed across West Mercia to help people feel safe when out alone.
- A few months into this term, I launched a public consultation to give communities the opportunity to shape the final version of my **Safer West Mercia Plan** and the focus for policing in the coming years.
- I re-launched my **Town & Parish Council survey**, after running it annually in my previous term, to seek to understand views and priorities of councils across West Mercia. The top three concerns were road safety, rural crime and anti-social behaviour.



Local Policing Community Charter

As part of my budget development for 2021/22, I worked with West Mercia Police to agree a new **Local Policing Community Charter**. This Charter was designed to set out clear commitments from the force as to how it will improve delivery against key community priorities, ensuring all the additional resources secured in the budget are fully utilised, and is felt and evidenced in all our communities across West Mercia.

The charter is based upon six principles:

1. Visibility and accessibility
2. Responding to communities
3. Prevention
4. Vulnerability
5. Relationships
6. Partnerships

Public engagement

- I was pleased to recruit two part-time **Assistant PCCs** to focus on working with communities by covering the north and south of the force area.
- In 2021 I, along with my Deputy and Assistant PCCs, carried out more than **130 engagements** across communities. This includes meeting with commissioning services as well as community groups.
- With the majority of Covid restrictions lifted on 19th July, I was keen to continue my series of public engagements. I announced I would be carrying out a series of **autumn events** in September covering Shropshire, Herefordshire, and Worcestershire.
- In September, as part of a **roadshow**, the Chief Constable and I visited businesses, local projects, community groups and residents across West Mercia to understand concerns and whether they feel engaged with.
- Engaging with the public, when setting my budget, is very important. I do this in order to ensure I am incorporating the public's views into my decisions from the very beginning of the process. As well as taking feedback from public engagements, I carried out my formal **budget consultation** for 2022/23 in December.
- To ensure the communities of West Mercia are aware of the work I am doing, I issued more than **120 press releases and statements** in 2021.
- I received more than **1,600** pieces of **correspondence** into my office.



2022-23

2022-23 highlights

April

- PCC launches public consultation regarding priorities in advance of planning the budget.



June

- PCC launches summer events programme to engage with communities.



August

- PCC takes up the role of Senior Responsible Officer for the two Combatting Drugs Partnerships in West Mercia, following the launch of the Government's 10-year drugs plan.
- PCC gives go ahead for new police firearms training centre.

10-YR PLAN

May

- Tracey Onslow steps down from the role of Deputy PCC, opening up the opportunity for someone new.
- PCC welcomes improved call handling times for 999.



July

- Independent Inquiry into Telford Child Sexual Exploitation (IITCSE) is published.

IITCSE

September

- PCC commits £900k to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on West Mercia's roads.





October

- PCC allocates £54k to Victim Support to deliver work to tackle hate crime.
- PCC launches Pin Your Poppy community project to remember service men and women, past and present.

December

- The PCC funds £13k towards a pilot scheme trialling CCTV in taxis in Telford & Wrekin.



February

- PCC's budget proposals receive backing from Police and Crime Panel, seeing £14.3m more funding going into policing.
- Plans approved, and contractor identified, for new joint police and fire hub in Redditch.

£14.3M

November

- West Mercia's Steer Clear programme, focused on tackling knife crime, receives a national recognition.



January

- Government announces commitment to check all current police officers against National Police Database.

DATA

March

- The Casey Report, into behaviour in the Met, is published.
- Police officer numbers reach a historic high in West Mercia.



Summary of activity 2022-23

Putting victims and survivors first

- To support ex-service personnel integrate into civilian life, and prevent them from coming into contact with the criminal justice system, I invested **£25k** in the **Remember Veterans** scheme.
- In July, the **Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Telford (IITCSE)** was published and outlined 47 recommendations, 13 of which include West Mercia Police and two for my office. In a public statement, I acknowledged the fact that victims and survivors, along with their loved ones, had been let down and I was sorry that this had happened. I outlined my commitment, which remains the case today, that I would ensure that lessons are learned to ensure no further harm is caused.
- I secured a further **£1.9 million** from the MoJ to support victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence.
- Further funding secured from the MoJ enabled a specialist **Sexual Abuse and Violence Navigator** post to continue in the Victim Advice Line up to 31st March 2025.



- With a rise in hate crime recording, and recognition that many incidents go unreported, I was pleased to grant **£82,000** towards Victim Support's hate crime engagement and awareness project '**I am ME!**'. More than 500 people were engaged with at the training and outreach events.
- The **Kulpa app** was piloted in West Mercia aimed at supporting victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence. The app was developed to capture best evidence in the form of forensic quality photographs of injuries.
- 2022 saw delivery of the second of a three-year contract with West Mercia Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Centre (WMRSASC) for the provision of **ISVAs**. The annual budget for this invaluable provision was **£1,898,936**.
- I raised concerns about the **backlog of cases** waiting to go to court, with these delays having a significant impact on victims and survivors waiting within the system.
- The court backlogs also raised the need for a review to be carried out of the **West Mercia Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB)**. I carried out this review in January 2022 to determine new priorities for the Board, with a supporting delivery plan and the development of performance metrics to measure activity. Some of the new priorities included prevention, improving timeliness and quality, and improving the victim experience.
- Over three years, I committed **£492,175** for **AXIS Counselling** to deliver a range of therapeutic counselling services to victims and survivors of sexual abuse in Shropshire and Telford. This funding included specialist provision to support victims and survivors that have learning disabilities or difficulties, alongside specialist support for children aged 5-10 years-old.
- In June 2022, I hosted a '**Listening to the Voice of the Victim and Survivors**' conference where we were fortunate to be joined by some survivors who shared their experiences of the criminal justice system in order to make improvements.
- Following this conference, I established a **West Mercia Joint Strategic Sexual Assault and Abuse Board**. The overall aim being to improve outcomes for victims of sexual abuse and assault.
- I was pleased to jointly commission **DRIVE** with Herefordshire and Worcestershire local authorities to roll the perpetrator programme out across more areas in West Mercia for three years.

- Through a partnership, led by the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin ICB, **£1.3 million** was secured from NHS/ EI funding for the development of a **Complex Care Pathfinder** for victims of sexual violence.
- In order to help investigations move more quickly and ensure victims can have their devices returned to them quickly, I committed an investment to **digital forensics**.
- In January 2023, I began a review of the **West Mercia Victims' Board**. This included setting clear priorities, a delivery plan and the development of performance metrics. A case studio is also presented at each meeting to ensure the **victims' voice** remains central to the work of the board.
- **£11.291 million** was spent in total on commissioned services, which includes prevention projects which are outlined in '**Building a more secure West Mercia**'.

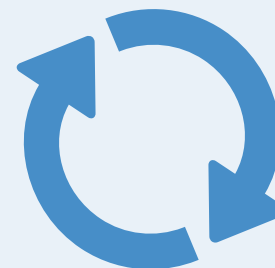
2,421
new referrals to Women's Aid IDVA service



67
restorative justice cases were referred to Victim Support - 100% of those that engaged reported an increase and improvement in their ability to cope after the crime



£££
£3.5m allocated spend for victims' services



1,622
referrals were made into the ISVA service, with 2,650 going onto receive longer term support and advocacy

15,000+
victims with identified needs contacted by Victim Advice Line - support offered to 6,215 victims who requested it



1,480
victims were referred into Victim Support to receive support from multi-crime Victim Care Co-ordinators



Building a more secure West Mercia

- **125** additional police officers were recruited.
- I commissioned **DIVERT**, with my regional counterparts, using monies seized regionally from proceeds of crime. DIVERT is focused on improving treatment pathways, diverts drug users from long-term drug use and reduces drug-related crime.
- In order to deliver the outcomes within the Government's "From Harm to Hope" 10-year drugs plan, I took up the role of Senior Responsible Officer for the local **Combatting Drugs Partnerships**. I am committed to work tirelessly with partners to deliver the outcomes, including: less drug-related crime, stronger families and communities and fewer drug-related deaths.
- In May, I announced that the **Steer Clear** project, focused on tackling knife crime, would be extended to cover Herefordshire. This supports my commitment to ensure that West Mercia remains a low knife crime rate. This project went onto receive national recognition by winning a **Howard League Community Award**.
- To support the delivery of the Government's new **Serious Violence Duty**, which commenced in January 2023, I was successful following a bid to the Home Office for **£789,003** (up to 2025). This funding allows me to support partners in exercising their requirements under the Duty.
- I increased the funding to WMRSASC by a further **£205,000** for the provision of **Branch** as well as the **Purple Leaf** prevention service. The services are focused on working with children and young people with an increased risk to child sexual exploitation.
- I worked with partners to secure an additional **£1,774,964** in funding for 2023/24 and 2023/24 from the fourth Home Office **Safer Streets** fund. The four bids covered West Mercia and focused on improving the night-time economy, reducing anti-social behaviour and improving lighting and CCTV.

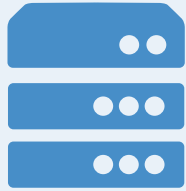


- Through working in partnership with Telford & Wrekin Council to deliver the **Safer & Stronger Communities** project, targeted activity saw a reduction in anti-social behaviour, crime levels and fly-tipping.
- I invested more than **£900,000** into three measures to curb harm on the **roads** across West Mercia. **£365,800** of which was allocated to increase West Mercia Police's Road Safety team by 11.5 full-time officers.
- I have invested circa **£74k** in **RoadPeace** to ensure injured and bereaved victims of serious injury collisions receive the support they need.



- I continued to invest in the **MORSE project**, a total of **£229k**, to focus on making roads safer by understanding the root causes of dangerous driver behaviour. In 2022/23, 190 referrals were made into the project.

- I allocated **£20k** into each local policing area for my **Road Safety Commissioner's Fund (CCF)**. This funding was accessible for local communities to fund projects designed to improve safety on the road.
- Following a successful application to the Home Office, I secured **£487,405.40** to deliver a further 12 months of low to medium risk perpetrator programmes designed to tackle **domestic abuse**.
- I committed to a three-year fixed funding arrangement with the **Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs)** (2022-2025). Each CSP was allocated **£636,541** per year to fund community projects.
- I also provided **£20k** to each of the five CSPs for invest in **CCTV** projects, which included control suite upgrades and installation of new cameras.
- As part of my **Commissioner's Community Fund**, I made available **£30k** to each of the local policing areas (at a total of £150k) to support small, localised initiatives.
- In addition to the '**mini police officer**' signs I have made available for schools, I funded a further **60** to remind road users to be considerate when driving and parking near schools.

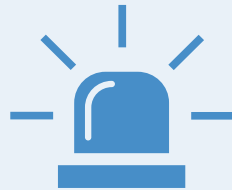


94,832

offences were recorded

21

county lines closed down
by West Mercia Police



27,991

requests were made via West
Mercia Police's online reporting
methods – a 25% increase on
the previous year

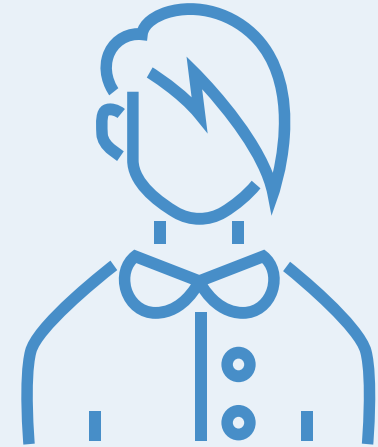
£53,388

in funding is given to deliver DIVERT
programme, focused on drug-related
crime (the programme has supported
237 people out of 741 referrals, whose
typical drug of choice is cannabis)



631

children and young people,
aged 10-17 years-old,
received support from the
CLIMB project which is
delivered by the Children's
Society (the project works
with children and young
people who are displaying
early indicators of being
at risk of, or involved in,
criminal exploitation)



2,431

children and young people across
Herefordshire, Worcestershire and
Shropshire received either a group or
1:1 session through the Purple Leaf
prevention service



95

people were referred to the RoadPeace
service, of which more than half were
bereaved victims and 22 were witnesses
to fatal collisions





Reforming West Mercia

- The **budget** for the year was set at **£260.5m**, an increase of £15.6m on the previous year.
- As part of my budget proposals for 2022/23, I committed to a further **125** police officers to build on the need to improve the response from, as well as visibility and accessibility of, police officers across West Mercia. This investment took the establishment figure up to **2,456**, which represented a historic high.
- In addition to the boost in police officers, the budget proposals saw **55** police officers go into new **Neighbourhood Crime Fighting Teams** and **10** police officers into **Community Safety Engagement** Officer teams.
- In May, Tracey Onslow made the decision to step down from the role of **Deputy PCC**, which opened the opportunity for someone new. Marc Bayliss went on to be confirmed as my new Deputy PCC a few months later.
- In February, plans were approved for a new **joint police and fire station in Redditch**, with construction company 'Speller Metcalfe' appointed to construct the building. This innovative project, in partnership with Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, enables improvements for vital emergency services.
- Building on my commitment to invest in the police estate, I have been pleased to work with partners to deliver **co-location** projects across West Mercia. This has included local policing teams moving into town council buildings or with fire services. This ensure efficiencies are made, but presence is maintained in communities.
- To ensure the West Mercia Police maintains compliance with national standards around officer training, I was pleased to give the go ahead for a new fit-for-purpose **firearms training facility** at the force's headquarters in Worcestershire.

- Continuing my commitment to reducing the carbon footprint of policing, I funded a further **10 e-bikes**, bringing the fleet to 20.
- 2022/23 saw a significant upgrade in the **support infrastructure** for running IT applications, which enabled the rollout of Microsoft 365 to start.
- At a regional level, I continue to work with regional colleagues to ensure the four forces meet their obligations under the **Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR)**. A revised version of the SPR was published in February 2023. The revised SPR provided strengthened detail around the action required from policing at the local and regional level to the critical national threats.
- In March 2023, myself and the regional PCCs held a third 'deep dive' session with the **West Midlands Counter Terrorism Unit (WMCTU)** focusing on the regional threat and risk picture.
- Addressing concerns that had been raised by residents, about the delays in receiving a new or updated firearms licence, I announced an investment of £200k to address the backlogs. The funding will enable West Mercia Police's **Firearms Licensing Unit** to deliver a faster and more convenient service without compromising public protection and safety.

- Following the murder of Sarah Everard, **Baroness Casey** carried out a review into the standards of behaviour and internal culture of the Metropolitan Police Service. This report shone a light on some shocking failings of the Met, which included the standards of **vetting**. I therefore welcomed the Government's commitment to check all current officers against the Police National Database, in order to provide additional scrutiny and build confidence in policing.





Reassuring West Mercia's communities

- Understanding the concerns from the public around contacting West Mercia Police in a non-emergency and emergency, I was pleased to see improved call handling times for **999** in May. More than **90%** of **999** calls transferred to West Mercia Police were answered within **ten seconds**.
- In May, I ran my annual **Town & Parish Council Survey**. I received **144** responses and the top three community concerns identified were: road safety (32%), crime (22%) and ASB (11%).
- **“I expect change, I expect better”**. In the past 12 months, three officers from West Mercia Police have been dismissed, or would have been dismissed had they had not resigned, for abusing their position for sexual purposes. Added to the challenge of building people's confidence and trust in their police force.

Public engagement

- In 2022 I, along with my Deputy and Assistant PCCs, carried out more than **100 engagements** across communities. This includes meeting with commissioning services as well as community groups.
- Ahead of setting my budget at the end of the year, I decided to carry out public engagement and consultation earlier in order to understand community priorities. When the consultation closed, I was pleased to have more than **1,400** responses from residents and business in West Mercia. The top three priorities were: anti-social behaviour, road safety and visibility and accessibility of police officers.
- I launched my annual **summer events** programme, with the following events visited: Worcester Carnival, Ledbury Celebration, Bridgnorth Water Safety Day, Pershore Plum Festival, Ludlow Food Festival and Broadway Food Festival.
- I was pleased to launch '**Pin Your Poppy**', a community project focused on remembering service men and women, past and present. The project encouraged people to make poppies and pin to Unknown Tommy statues, that were placed across the force area, ahead of Remembrance Sunday.
- To ensure the communities of West Mercia are aware of the work I am doing, I issued more than **130 press releases and statements** in 2022.
- I received more than **1,700** pieces of **correspondence** into my office.





2023-24

2023-24 highlights



April

- PCC backs Government plans to tackle grooming gangs by supporting police forces with specialist officers.

June

- PCC launches a bespoke consultation to better understand concerns of Pershore residents.



August

- PCC delivers next step of reform with an electric vehicle charging station at Worcester Police Station.



May

- PCC secures £1.2m to support the rollout of domestic abuse perpetrator programme, DRIVE, across West Mercia.
- King Charles III is crowned.

£1.2M

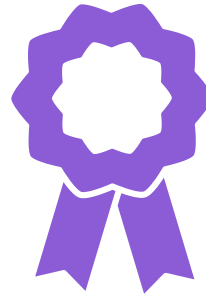
July

- PCC secures £1.4m from the Safer Streets 4 fund to focus on tackling VAWG.



September

- Topping out ceremony takes place at new joint police and fire hub in Redditch.



November

- Nitrous Oxide is categorised as a Class C drug.
- PCC's office is awarded a White Ribbon accreditation.
- PCC's ICV scheme is awarded a silver level accreditation.

October

- First digital kiosk is installed outside Kidderminster Police Station.



December

- PCC announces Kyle Gordon as preferred candidate for Chief Constable of West Mercia.



Summary of activity 2023-24

Putting victims and survivors first

- I secured **£1.2 million** of Home Office funding to support the expansion of the domestic abuse perpetrator programme, **DRIVE**, into Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin.
- My office was awarded a White Ribbon accreditation. Ambassadors and champions will advocate positive attitudes and behaviour, raising awareness of the impact of VAWG on victims and survivors and encouraging colleagues to make the White Ribbon promise.
- I was pleased to recommission the **Adult Sexual Assault and Referral Centre (SARC)** service for a further five years in West Mercia. This 365 day, 24hr access enables people that have been sexually assaulted to get the medical examination and care they need.
- In 2023, I committed a total of **£1.386 million** funding for the **Victim Advice Line** and **Victim Support** to continue providing support to victims of crime. This also included the continuation of two specialist roles focused on modern slavery & human trafficking and sexual violence.
- Through the MoJ, I was able to secure **£322,674** for counselling services provided by **AXIS** and **WMRSASC**.
- The **West Mercia Survivors' Online Pathway** went live, providing people with information on the sexual violence support that is available across West Mercia.



Building a more secure West Mercia

- In April 2023, West Mercia Police moved to a new approach in the use of **out of court disposals**. A few months later, I was successful for a funding bid of **£247,115** that enabled **Willowdene Rehabilitation Services** to create a diversionary pathway for female offenders.
- I made **£100k** available to work in partnership with the **Worcestershire Community Foundation** to deliver community projects. In August, 15 community groups received funding to deliver projects focused on building community cohesion.
- In June 2023, West Mercia Police, partners and I established a new partnership approach to reduce homicides in West Mercia – known as **Op Freya**. The governance of which sits under my **Crime Reduction Board (CRB)** with support of four local operational groups. The CRB identifies data that could be used to reduce the potential risk to people becoming victims of offenders of homicide.
- Reinforcing my commitment to breaking cycle of crime, I re-commissioned the **DIVERT** programme with the regional PCCs. A further **£22k** was given to support drug offenders.

- With reports of **hate crime** more than doubling in West Mercia overall in the last five years, I committed to continue funding Victim Support's Hate Crime Engagement and Awareness Project '**I am ME!**' until March 2024.
- Determined to support initiatives that promote healthy relationships amongst young people, I provided an additional **£200k** to **Purple Leaf**.
- I allocated a further **£200k** to the **CLIMB** project, delivered by The Children's Society, to prevent young people from being exploited by criminals.
- I made **£250k** available to tackle road safety in West Mercia. The money was made available to support communities to introduce new innovative campaigns, initiatives and interventions which can reduce collisions, traffic offences and increase driver awareness to help improve behaviour.



- Measures to support young people steer clear of **knife crime** was boosted by **£600k**. This investment will help group workshops and 1:1 sessions continue across West Mercia to give young people between the ages of 10 and 17 years-old a safe space to talk about their involvement in knife crime and make a change.
- Building on the success of securing funding from the Government's **Safer Streets** initiative, as part of the fifth round I secured **£1 million** and boosted the pot to £1.5 million, through match-funding, to make West Mercia's communities safer.
- In November, following awareness raising and lobbying in partnership with Mark Garnier MP, I welcomed the ban on **nitrous oxide**.





Reforming West Mercia

- Following a review, I implemented a new holding to account process which was renamed **Assurance & Accountability** meetings.
- As part of my commitment to reform West Mercia, I was pleased to introduce **electric charging stations** at Worcester Police Station.
- To mark a project milestone for the new joint police and fire station in **Redditch**, a **topping out ceremony** was held in September which brought all partners involved together.
- As part of a cost-effective solution to put more money towards front-line policing, and improve partnership working, **Wem**-based police officers relocated to the local NHS medical centre.
- To maintain presence in the heart of the community, Redditch based police officers temporarily relocated to the **Redditch shopping centre** whilst the new joint police and fire station is built.
- To make best use of technology, **digital kiosks** were installed outside Kidderminster and the temporary Redditch station. These kiosks will allow people to access their local policing teams and the wider force.
- To ensure the force has fit-for-purpose resources, and police officers can maintain visibility, I committed to invest **£1 million** to improve and update the force's **fleet**.
- In order to address community concerns regarding backlogs in the **Firearms Licensing Unit**, I committed to invest **£260k** to tackle delays. The investment will also fund additional vehicles to allow the unit to carry out visits as part of the application process.

- I was proud that my **Independent Custody Visitors scheme** was awarded a **silver-level accreditation** in November 2023. This accreditation means that the scheme has been recognised for providing a good standard of custody visiting and volunteer management.
- Recognising the financial challenges the country continues to face, I consulted on my **budget proposals** which are focused on ensuring the service the public receives from West Mercia Police is improved.
- With a requirement for **SARCs** to be accredited to ISO 15189, work is underway to ensure the facilities in West Mercia meet that requirement. Whilst work is underway to progress the building of a new facility in Telford & Wrekin.



Reassuring West Mercia's Communities

- As part of my **Community Conversation** engagements, I visited **Pershore** which saw more than 60 people attend to raise concerns. I also launched a bespoke consultation to greater understand concerns of the wider Pershore community. 400 people took part in the consultation, which found that 52% of residents think police visibility is poor and under half (44%) of respondents felt West Mercia Police was working well with the local community. This prompted a greater focus on improving the feelings of unsafe, including working with partners, seeking assurance from the Chief Constable and updating the communities accordingly.
- In October, I commissioned a **second survey** for **Pershore** residents to understand if there had been any improvements to the concerns that were initially raised. A second public meeting was then held to feedback the results. The Chief Constable and Area Commander also joined the meeting.
- In May, **King Charles III** was crowned. I took the opportunity to join community celebrations across West Mercia and plant a tree and place a commemorative 'coin' in the police headquarters grounds.
- To further engage with communities, I announced my **summer events programme** which included the Handbury Show, Oswestry Food and Drink Festival, Bromsgrove Carnival and Herefordshire Food Festival.
- As part of my work to reduce the backlogs in the **Firearms Licensing Unit**, I hosted a **Community Conversation** event. More than 55 members of the shooting community attended the event in Hereford to understand more about the unit, the backlogs and ask questions to the force and myself. For those who live outside Herefordshire, an **online public meeting** took place on Facebook to understand community concerns around the backlogs.
- In August, I held a **public A&A** meeting with the Chief Constable on **visibility and accessibility**. This session, which was filmed and shared on my Facebook and YouTube channels, saw more than 140 questions come in from the public.
- Similar to the concerns that were raised in Pershore, I commissioned a bespoke consultation with **Shrewsbury** residents following concerns raised about a feeling of increases in **anti-social behaviour** in Shrewsbury town centre. This formed part of wider work including the implementation of an ASB taskforce with partners to address the issues.



- In November, I re-launched my **Roads Focus** campaign to drive change across West Mercia. The first drop-in sessions took place in Herefordshire, working in partnership with West Mercia Police, which includes local policing teams and the Road Safety Team, local councils and council highways teams. Driver awareness sessions also took place online to improve driver's theory knowledge. Worcestershire sessions took place in January, with the other areas to follow.
- To further support my commitment to tackle road safety, I launched a **poster competition** for primary schools to win a 'mini police officer' sign to place outside their school.

Public engagement

- In 2023 I, along with my Deputy and Assistant PCCs, carried out more than **230 engagements** across communities. This includes meeting with commissioning services as well as community groups.
- In 2023, a record number of **Town & Parish Councils** had their say on policing in my annual survey. **182** councils, an increase of 30% from last year, submitted their views. This year's top concerns were rural crime (52%) and road safety (78%).
- Ahead of setting my budget at the end of the year, I decided to carry out public engagement in order to understand community priorities. Over the course of the engagements, I heard from circa 1,000 people. The top three priorities were: road safety, visibility and accessibility of police officers and VAWG.
- I was pleased to carry out my '**Pin Your Poppy**' project again, focused on remembering service men and women, past and present. The project once again encouraged people to make poppies and pin to Unknown Tommy statues, that were placed across the force area. Ahead of Remembrance Sunday, a commemoration event was held in Shrewsbury.
- To ensure the communities of West Mercia are aware of the work I am doing, I issued more than **150 press releases and statements** in 2023.
- I received more than **1,800** pieces of **correspondence** into my office.



Performance and monitoring

Independent Custody Visitor Scheme

My Independent Custody Visitor (ICV) Scheme sees trained volunteers make unannounced visits to all West Mercia's custody suites to check on the welfare and treatment of detainees. I greatly value the work of the volunteers and I am always grateful for their contribution.

- The Scheme was code compliant since taking part in the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) with ICVA back in 2021. In November 2023 the Scheme achieved Silver, a level up from code compliant.
- Data recording of the ICV scheme started in July 2021. Since then, there has been a total of 430 visits.
- The membership for the Scheme currently stands at 38 volunteers.
- To further strengthen the oversight, I have set up quarterly meetings with the force Custody Lead.
- The regional scheme managers meetings have been re-established to share best practice.
- A new and improved ICV Handbook was published in January 2024.

Animal Welfare Scheme

- The Animal Welfare scheme was launched in September 2021 and volunteers have carried out 27 visits.
- Four of the ICV Scheme volunteers also volunteer for the Animal Welfare Scheme.
- To date, 38 operational police dogs have been visited, and six retired police dogs visited.



Holding to account

In January 2023, I commissioned a wholesale review of my holding to account function. As part of this review, a number of recommendations were identified to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the process with a focus on tangible outcomes and service improvement for communities.

The recommendations also facilitated more robust scrutiny of key performance issues on a quarterly basis, including performance in relation to local and national policing priorities and HMICFRS recommendations.

The review also prompted a revision to the name, with the meetings now called Assurance & Accountability meetings.

Since 2021, the following meetings and requests were carried out:

Year	Thematic	Performance	Public	Total meetings	Adhoc requests*
2021/22	7	3	1	11	7
2022/23	10	1	2	13	9
2023/24	4	4	2	10	5
Term total	21	8	5	34	21

Caveat 1. Total meetings for 2023/24 is planned meetings. Seven meetings will have taken place before Jan 2024 when EOTR needs to be finalised.

Caveat 2. Adhoc requests for 2023/24 is as at 29/11 and not a full financial year.

* Adhoc requests enable the PCC to respond dynamically to emerging local/national issues that may not require a thematic deep dive session, or where a matter is time critical. Adhoc requests are issued over email and the Chief Constable provides a written response.



Below are some of the themes that have been covered as part of the A&A process:

- Review of budget investments.
- Serious violence/homicide.
- VAWG /sexual violence.
- Independent Inquiry into CSE in Telford (IITCSE).
- Victim Advice Line – including victim satisfaction.
- Most Appropriate Agency (MAA) policy and impact.
- Diversity, equality and inclusion – including stop and search.
- Community engagement, public confidence, and accessibility and visibility.
- Ongoing performance monitoring of non-emergency (101) and emergency (999) lines.
- Anti-social behaviour.
- HMICFRS inspections including:
 - PEEL 2021/22.
 - Custody inspection.
 - PEEL 2021/22 revisit.
 - Misconduct, misogyny and vetting.
 - Victim service assessment.

As part of my holding to account role I have also introduced a performance dashboard, that will be available on my website, for people to easily monitor the force's response to crime.

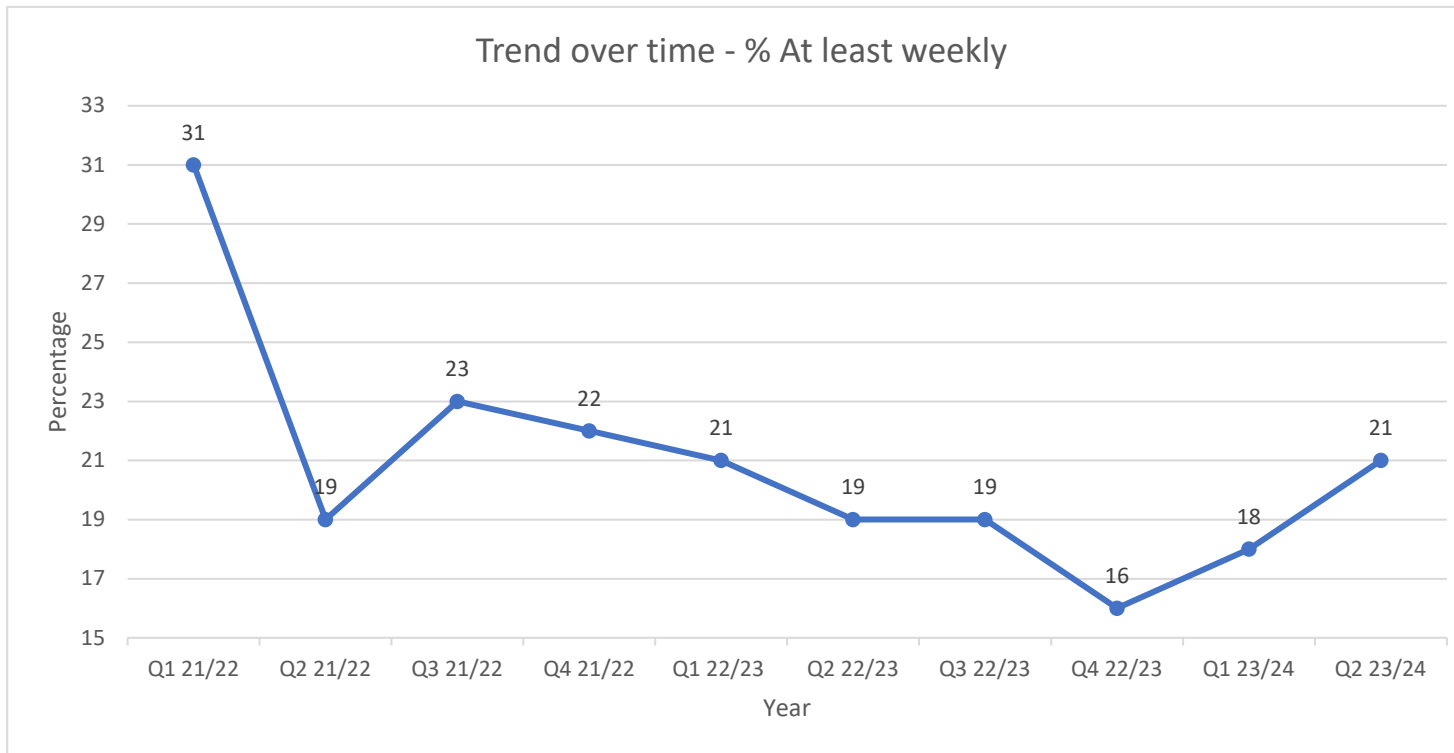


Confidence data

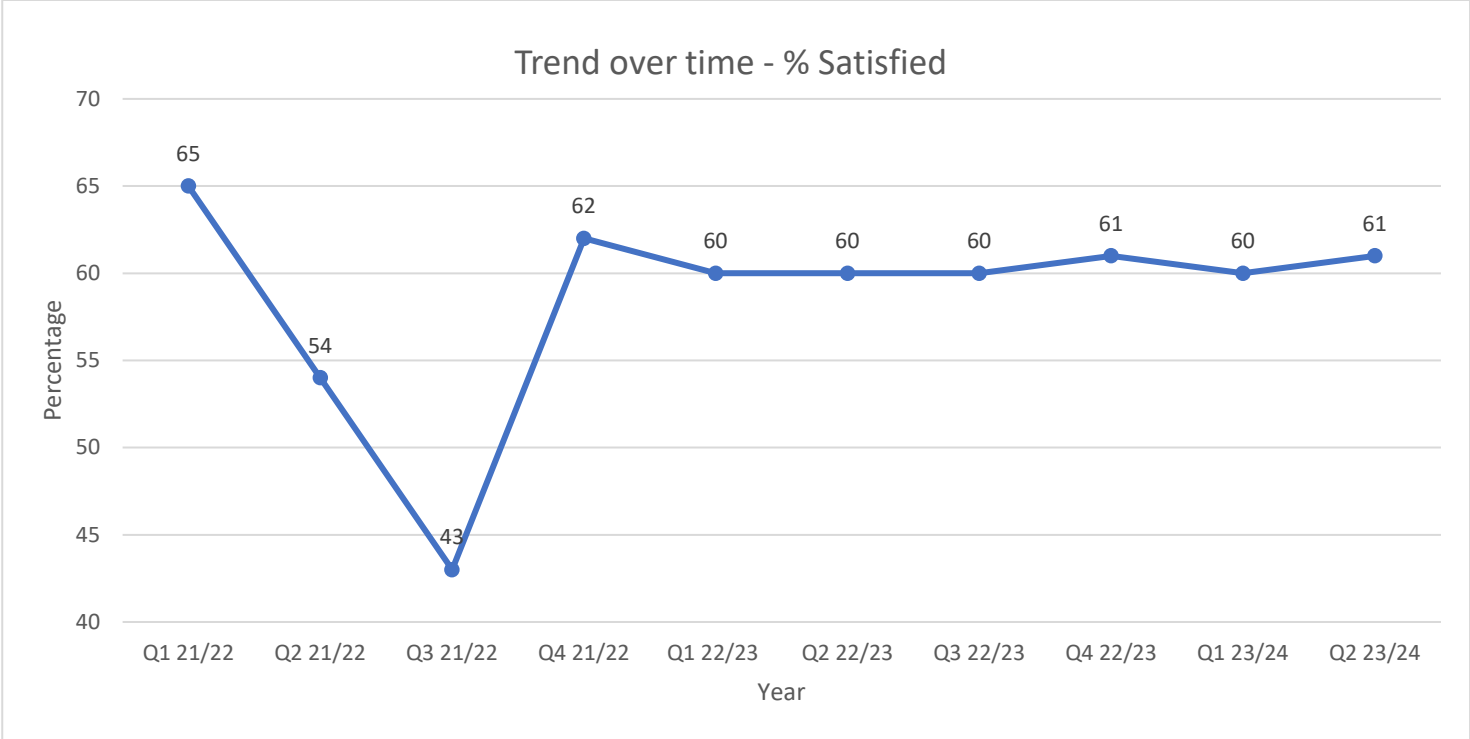
I have continued to run my Perceptions Survey, which is an ongoing survey focused on speaking to West Mercia communities to understand how they feel about the service they receive from West Mercia Police.

Since 2021, the following trends have been seen around key questions.

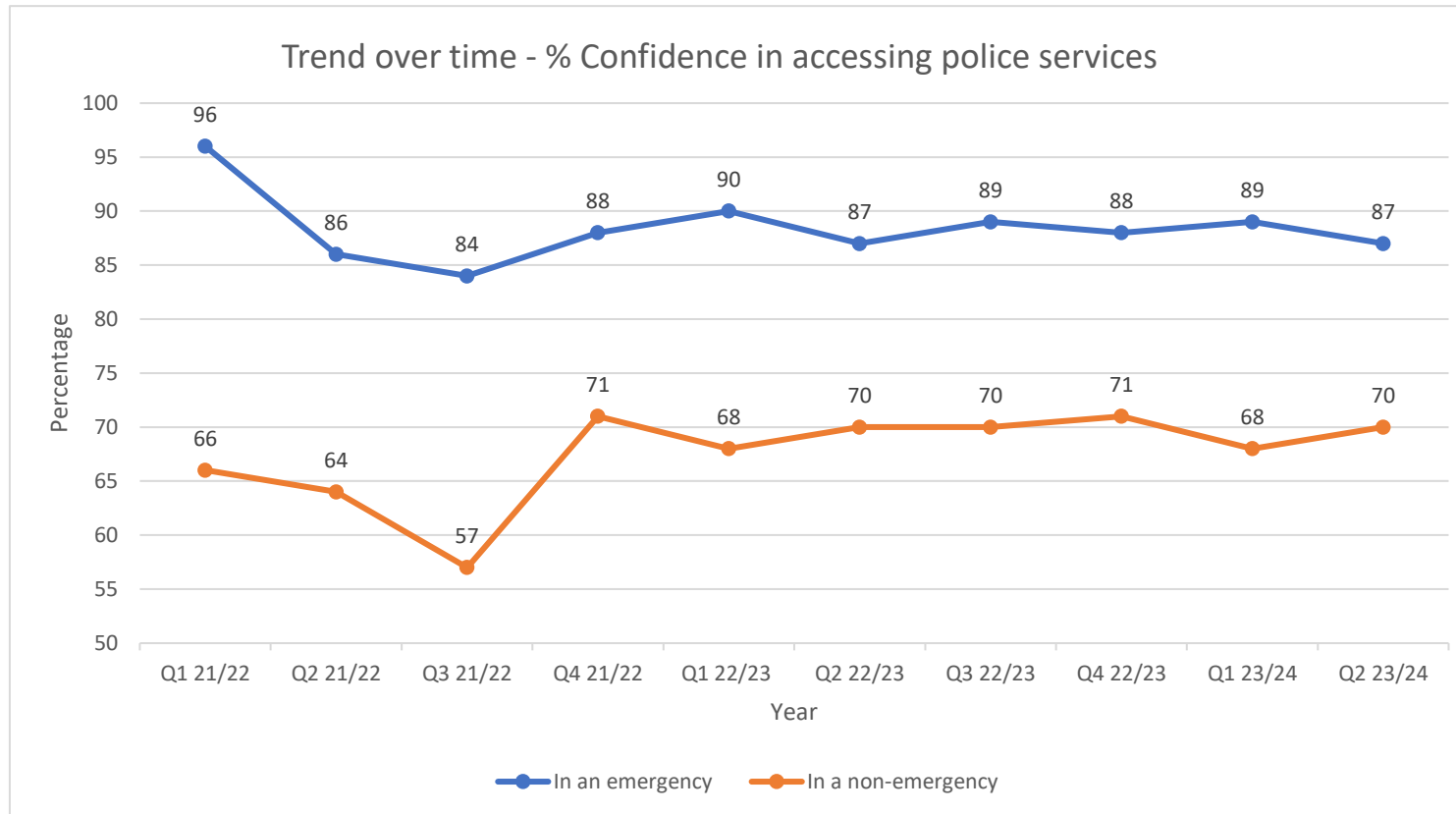
1. Thinking about your local area, how often would you say you see a police officer or PSCO?



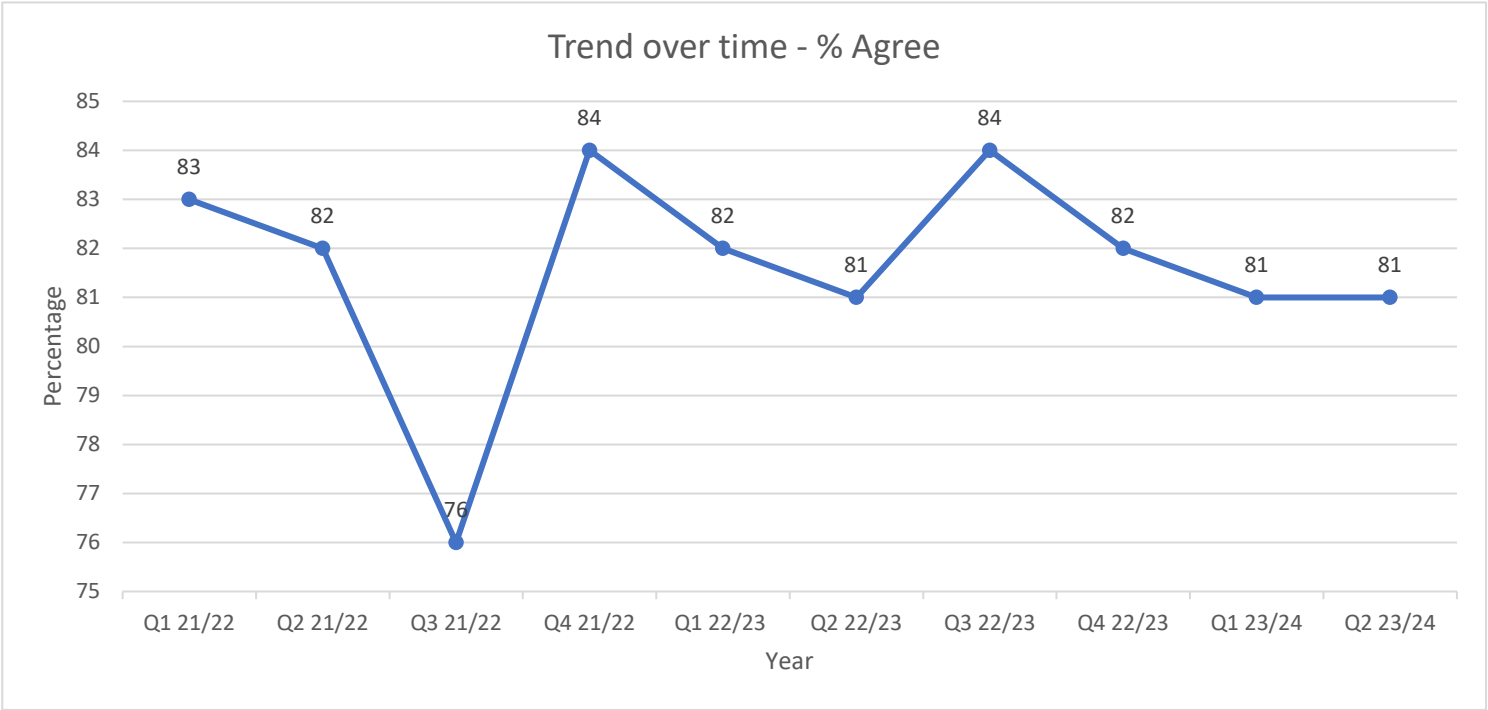
2. How satisfied are you with the levels of policing in your local area?



3. How confident are you, if at all, that you could speak to or access police services in your local area if you (or someone else) needed help in an emergency/non-emergency?



4. How confident are you, if at all, that you could speak to or access police services in your local area if you (or someone else) needed help in an emergency/non-



Strategic policing requirement: Assurance statement

VAWG, Terrorism, SOC, national cyber event, CSA, public disorder and civil emergencies

The Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) sets out those threats which, in the Home Secretary's view, are the biggest threat to public safety and must be given due regard by PCCs when issuing or varying Police and Crime Plans. It supports PCCs as well as Chief Constables to plan, prepare and respond to these threats by clearly linking the local response to the national, highlighting the capabilities and partnerships that policing needs to ensure it can fulfil its national responsibilities.

A revised version of the SPR was published in February 2023 which provided strengthened detail around the action required from policing at the local and regional level to the critical national threats. The 2023 SPR sets out seven identified national threats. These are as follows:

- Violence against women and girls (VAWG).
- Serious and organised crime (SOC).
- Terrorism.
- Cyber.
- Child sexual abuse.
- Public disorder.
- Civil emergencies.

These remain from the 2015 version with the addition in 2023 of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), reflecting the threat it presents to public safety and confidence.

Given this end of term report is for April 2021 to March 2024, it will not respond in detail to the revised SPR due to the timing of its publication. However, the PCC has confidence that due regard has been given to the threat areas in both versions of the SPR in his Police and Crime Plan and in his role holding the Chief Constable to account. Whilst VAWG has only been included since February 2023, a clear commitment to tackling VAWG has featured in the 'Secure' pillar since the publication of the PCP in 2021.

WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL 7 FEBRUARY 2024

WORK PROGRAMME

Summary

1. From time to time the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel (PCP) will review its work programme and consider which issues should be investigated as a priority.

Background

2. Under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 the Panel is responsible for scrutinising the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) exercise of their statutory functions. This includes:
 - (a) The power of veto, by a two-thirds majority of the total panel membership, over the level of the PCC's proposed precept;
 - (b) The power to review the Police and Crime Plan and make recommendations to the PCC who must have regard to them;
 - (c) The power to review the PCC's annual report and make recommendations at a public meeting, which the PCC must attend;
 - (d) The power to require the PCC to attend the Panel to answer questions.
3. Some of these functions are carried out at a specific time of year – for example the precept must be considered and a view given to the PCC by 8 February each year.
4. As a Scrutiny body the Panel reviews decisions made by the PCC, performance and issues of concern or interest. It is not possible to carry out all these functions in detail and the Panel needs to plan its workload and agree its priorities.
5. The enclosed work programme takes into account 'routine' items, items which are required to be considered by the Panel at particular points in the year and topics for which the Panel has asked the PCC to provide a report.

Dates of Future Meetings

6. Dates and details of future meetings are available on the County Council website. The next planned Panel meeting is on 25 July (11am).

[Browse meetings - West Mercia Police and Crime Panel - Worcestershire County Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.moderngov.co.uk/Meetings/Agenda/2024/02/07/115466)

Purpose of the Meeting

7. The Panel is asked to consider the 2024 Work Programme and agree whether it would wish to make any amendments. The Panel will wish to retain the flexibility to take into account any urgent issues which may arise.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1: West Mercia Police and Crime Panel Work Programme

Specific Contact Points for this Report

Samantha Morris, Interim Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager
Tel: 01905 844963 Email: sjmorris@worcestershire.gov.uk

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.

[All Agendas and Minutes are available on the Council's website](#)

West Mercia Police and Crime Panel - Work Programme 2024

Meeting Date	Area of Scrutiny	Date of Last Report	Notes/Follow-up Action
7 February 2024	PCC's Proposed Precept (and Medium-Term Financial Plan) including budget briefing/Task Group arrangements	3 February 2023	
	Police & Crime Plan Activity and Performance Monitoring Report		
	End of Term Report of the PCC		
	Work Programme		
25 July 2024	Draft Annual Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia		
	Police & Crime Plan Activity and Performance Monitoring Report		
	Quarterly budget monitoring (and key performance indicators)		Quarterly
	Annual Report on Complaints	7 September 2022 15 September 2021	
	Update on Information Technology - outcome of investment		Agreed at 27 July 2023 meeting
	Work Programme		

11 September 2024	Police & Crime Plan Activity and Performance Monitoring Report		
	Quarterly budget monitoring (and key performance indicators)		
	Work Programme		
6 November 2024	Police & Crime Plan Activity and Performance Monitoring Report		
	Quarterly budget monitoring (and key performance indicators)		
	Work Programme		
Potential items			
TBC	Offenders to justice – outcomes		
TBC	Update on the progress of Combating Drug Partnerships (CDPs)	27 July 2023 23 November 2022	Update twice yearly
TBC	ICT Improvement Programme		
TBC	Harassment of Women and Girls		Requested at 30 Oct 2023 meeting
TBC	Update on the Criminal Justice System		
TBC	Update on the Prevention Strategy	7 September 2022	
TBC	Cultural Audit of the organisation		Referred to at 27/7/23 meeting, results of audit would be presented to Panel when completed.

TBC	Update on the progress Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) PEEL 2021/22 – An inspection of West Mercia Police	15 June 2022	
TBC	Update on the progress of Joint HMICFRS & Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) Inspection Report: An unannounced inspection visit to police custody suites in West Mercia Police.	15 June 2022	
TBC	Update on the progress made against His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) - A report into the effectiveness of vetting and counter-corruption arrangements in West Mercia Police (published 17 November)		

Statutory items			
	PCC's Proposed Precept (and Medium Term Financial Plan) including budget briefing/Task Group arrangements	February/July/December	
	Draft Police and Crime Plan (or variation to it)		
	Annual Report of the PCC	Annually	
	Review the PCC's proposed appointment of a Chief Constable, Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer and/or the Deputy PCC	As needed	
Regular items	Police & Crime Plan Activity and Performance Monitoring Report	Every meeting	
	Quarterly budget monitoring (including key performance indicators)	Every meeting	

Work Programme	Every meeting	
Annual Report on Complaints	Annually	